



COMFORT

FOR ALL

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Under this head are published every month the best original short stories received under the following prize offer and the writers of which have complied with the conditions here named.

Only regular subscribers of COMFORT may compete for the prizes. All contributions must bear the writer's full name and address; must be written on one side of the paper only and be mailed in a sealed envelope, duly stamped, to EDITOR NUTSHELL STORY CLUB, care of COMFORT, AUGUSTA, MAINE.

All stories must be strictly original and contributors may write upon any subject, whether based upon fact, fancy or fiction—of adventure, love, war, peace; of city or country life, or of experiences on land or sea—but no story must contain more than 1200 or less than 500 words. No manuscript will be returned unless an addressed and stamped envelope is enclosed.

The writer of the best original story will receive \$25 cash; of the second best, \$20 cash; of the third best, \$15 cash and of the fourth best, \$10 cash.

First class original stories of from three to four thousand words will be purchased outright at the most liberal prices.

The prize winners for February are:
Alwin B. Jovenil, "The Man in Black," 1st prize.
Maggie K. Allen, "The Phantom Bear," 2nd prize.
Alice Ruth Moore, "That Lost Year," 3rd prize.
Helena H. Thomas, "Looking Under the Bed," 4th prize.

THE MAN IN BLACK.

BY ALWIN B. JOVENIL.

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ONE Sunday night I entered a village church and dropped into a back pew. As I did so, a man sitting some two seats to the front of me turned, and for a moment I had a distinct view of his face.

I am something of a student of physi-

ognomy, my business requires that I should be and this man's countenance, especially his eyes, at once attracted and held my attention.

The glowing orbs, which for a second had flashed into mine, were uncommonly large, black, deep-set, and surrounded by dark rings. It was the peculiar steady glitter emanating from them which had first riveted my attention. The face had a chalk-like pallor, though the full lips were ruddy with blood and a tiny spot of red glowed on each cheek. The cheekbones were a trifle high and the forehead tall and narrow. He had no beard nor mustache and his hair, though a ruddy coal-black, was now slightly streaked with gray. He was somewhat above the average height, with narrow, slightly stooping shoulders, and was clothed in

a neat suit of black of a clerical cut.

The more I studied the man the deeper became my interest. I was positive something was wrong with him; but did not dream of the startling verification my judgment was soon to receive.

Shortly after my entrance a young man came in and took a seat by my side. My attention was so concentrated upon the man in black that I gave the youth but a casual glance; enough, however, to show me an unusually handsome face and a graceful form clothed in garments of the latest style and richest texture. "One of the beau monde," I thought, and gave him no further consideration.

During the week there had been in the city a theatrical troupe, who had been very successful in filling the opera hall each evening. Perhaps it was this fact which suggested to the pastor the idea that now the opportune moment had arrived to preach a sermon on theaters and theater-goers. Be that as it may, the discourse was directed against plays, players, and playgoers, in toto.

I have only a confused remembrance of the sermon itself. It did not interest me. I do not believe in indiscriminate condemnation; and the discourse that night was the most bitter denunciation of the theater and everything connected with it, I had ever heard.

I could see from the fixed position of the head that the glowing eyes of the man in black were bent constantly upon the minister. As the discourse proceeded, he gradually leaned more and more forward, and I knew by the nervous way in which his long white fingers gripped the back of the seat in front of him, that he was becoming deeply agitated. Twice he partly arose from his seat and each moment his excitement grew upon him. Suddenly he sprang to his feet and, with his right hand gripping something concealed in his bosom, strode quickly up the aisle toward the pastor. The pastor stopped short in the midst of a sentence and involuntarily, as from one man, the sound of a long breath of horror went up from the congregation.

"Glory Hallelujah!" burst from the lips of the man, as he sprang up the pulpit stairs and faced the audience. "Glory Hallelujah! The Lord has spoken! Thank Him, O ye people; for His wonderful goodness thank Him! The Lord thought to destroy this city with fire and brimstone, like unto Sodom and Gomorrah of old, because of its great wickedness. But He has harkened unto my voice. He will stay His hand of wrath. He will accept a sacrifice. In the blood of this holy man thy sins shall be washed away. Thank Him, O ye people; for His wonderful goodness, thank Him!"

He withdrew his right hand from his bosom and the long keen blade of a knife flashed in the lamplight. Not a sound, not a motion,

scarcely a breath came from the horrified congregation. All sat as if chained to their seats.

The man turned to the pastor, who stood with ashen face and trembling knees powerless from fear. "Down upon thy knees, holy man, and bare thy bosom for the sacrificial knife," he cried, lifting the gleaming steel high above his head. "'Tis thy blessed privilege to shed thy blood for this people. The Lord, God Almighty, has commanded it."

With a groan the pastor fell upon his knees, his face showing pinched and white with terror and his eyes fixed in a fascination of horror upon the point of the uplifted knife.

The glowing eyes of the man in black looked down upon the face of the man of God. "Beloved of the Lord," he cried, "this day, with thy red blood, shalt the black sins of this people be washed whiter than snow." Then his wild eyes turned upward and his voice grew stern and solemn. "In Thy name, O God, I make this blood-offering for the remission of the sins of this people. Amen."

The long keen blade began to tremble; but before the fatal downward rush came, a loud clear voice rang out: "Stay thy arm, O holy prophet of God! Stay thy arm until I pin this bit of white paper over the heart of the man, or else, how canst thou tell where to drive the sharp point of thy knife!"

And I saw the young man, who had seated himself by my side, arise to his feet and quietly walk up the aisle toward the mad-man, with a bit of white paper held between the fingers of his uplifted hand.

The wild eyes of the man in black turned to the face of the youth. "Thou hast spoken wisely," he said, after a moment's keen scrutiny. "But make haste, for thou shalt also hold a basin in which to catch the flowing blood," and he lowered the knife to await his coming.

As coolly and as quietly, as though he was about to pin a button-hole bouquet upon the lapel of a companion's coat, the young man approached the kneeling minister and, placing the bit of white paper over his heart, turned to the man, whose burning eyes had followed his every movement, and bade him hand to him the large pin sticking in the wall directly behind the pulpit.

So naturally was this request made that the man in black turned, without a moment's hesitation, to secure the pin.

The instant his back was toward him the young man sprang upon the maniac and, gripping him about the shoulders so as to pinion his arms to his sides, bore him to the floor; where he held him, despite his desperate struggles, until help came and the man was securely bound and taken away.

The man in black proved to be an escaped lunatic from a neighboring asylum.

And the brave youth? Well, all I know of him is this: When the pastor picked up the bit of white paper, which had fallen from his bosom to the floor, he read, engraven thereon, these words: "W. Wesley Wilson, Leading Man, Globe Dramatic Company."

THE PHANTOM BEAR.

BY MAGGIE K. ALLEN.

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THE 23d day of January, 1785, John Jordon set out from his home at Harrodsburg, Ky., intending to take a day's hunt in the hills bordering upon Salt river.

At that time Harrodsburg was the only settlement within fifty miles, and the country, for miles in every direction, stretched away in dense, unbroken for-

est trodden only by wild beasts and an occasional band of Indians bent upon war or the chase.

The morning upon which Mr. Jordon left his home was warm for the time of the year and the snow had just begun to thaw.

He had not proceeded more than a couple of miles from his home when he struck the trail of a deer leading across the hill toward Salt river.

From a careful examination of the tracks, he was led to reason that the deer had passed that way not more than a half an hour previously, and that by traveling at a fair rate of speed, he would be sure to overtake the animal in a short time.

After crossing the hill the trail led off up Salt River valley for a couple of miles and then struck off due west.

Mr. Jordon still pushed forward at a good pace, and about one o'clock in the afternoon, just as he had reached the top of a rocky eminence, he saw the deer on the opposite hillside complacently feeding upon some fern that grew under a ledge of rocks.

Carefully raising his gun, he fired, striking the animal in the shoulder; but the deer, although sorely wounded, bounded away upon three legs and disappeared around the point of the hill.

Mr. Jordon hastily reloaded his gun and started through the forest on the blood-stained trail every moment expecting to overtake the wounded animal.

On and on he sped, now leaping a rocky chasm, now clambering over a fallen tree, oblivious to all save the trail of the wounded deer.

Wholly unnoticed by the animated hunter dark clouds began to appear in the west and gradually overspread the sky.

It was now nearly four o'clock in the afternoon, and a few small flakes of snow began to fall, while at the same time the temperature dropped several degrees and a lively breeze sprang up from the northwest, swaying the tree-tops and driving the snow, which had now begun to fall thick and fast, swiftly through the heavy timber.

Mr. Jordon had not yet overtaken the wounded animal and the snow, aided by the wind, was fast obscuring the trail.

He now realized that his game had eluded him and that any further attempt at overtaking it would prove futile; so he at once faced about, buttoned his hunting-coat tightly about him, and began to retrace his steps.

He had proceeded but a short distance on his homeward journey when he was beset by a difficulty on which he had not reckoned, for by this time the fallen snow, blown hither and thither by the wind, had almost obscured his tracks and added to this was the uncomfortable assurance that night was fast coming on.

But by far the most grave difficulty with which he had to contend was the fact that he was no longer able to distinguish the points of the compass; as the whole sky was overspread with heavy clouds and the coming night had already begun to spread its sombre mantle over the face of nature.

However, with the instinct of a true woodsman, he examined the trunk of a tree and knowing that the moss grew heaviest on the north side he was enabled to get his bearings with some degree of certainty; and, this being accomplished, he struck out boldly through the forest.

The night settled down dark as Styx, and but for the light of the snow he could not distinguish objects but a few paces distant. The snow continued to fall and the biting wind blew in fitful gusts driving it amid the trees and drifting it here and there to considerable depths.

He now realized that he was wholly at a loss regarding directions and to add terror to dread the wild beasts were beginning to howl uncomfortably near him.

Drawing his hunting-knife from its sheath he

struggled onward; but why, he scarcely knew. He might be going in the wrong direction, but then he could not stand still a prey to the pinching cold and the creatures of his imagination.

How far he had traveled he had no way of knowing. It seemed an age since darkness set in, and he argued that, had he traveled in the right direction, he must be near the settlement.

Once or twice he heard the scream of a panther in the forest near him and, although a brave man, his heart quailed at the thought of an encounter with one of these fierce beasts.

For some distance farther he struggled on through the drifts of snow and the fallen and tangled timber and at length came to the top of a low range of hills with a valley on either side.

How long he had been walking he could not say, but he felt that it was long past midnight, and that morning was not far away. It had stopped snowing, and the wind had again swung round to the south, making the air full of a soft gray mist.

Utterly bewildered and exhausted he stopped for a moment leaning against a tree. In an instant he was overcome by drowsiness, and must have fallen asleep, but the dropping of his gun from his relaxed hand awakened him.

He found that the tree against which he was leaning was a hollow one, and realized that within it he might find shelter until the dawn should enable him to tell just where he was.

So finding a hole he crept in. He did not dare to go to sleep, knowing that he was surrounded by dangers, so drawing his pipe from his pocket he lighted it to keep him awake. It was a struggle, for he was overcome with fatigue, and his eyelids would fall together in spite of himself.

Suddenly he was broad awake. Stealthy steps were approaching, there was a scraping on the bark of the tree, and a huge head was thrust into the opening. With a cry he started, and threw his hand out to reach his gun. His pipe, which he had just taken from his lips, was in his hand, and as he stretched it out, the burning tobacco was blown against the animal's nose.

With a snarl, the head was withdrawn, and the retreating steps were heard. Pulling himself up, with his gun in his hand, Mr. Jordan saw through the opening of the tree, a huge snow covered log lying on the ground not far away. Presently a dead head loomed above the log, the eyes showing like balls of flame. Taking deliberate aim he fired, and the head disappeared.

He instantly reloaded his gun, and started to get out of the tree, to see what the beast was, when looking again about the log, there like a dread phantom, was still the huge head with the fiery eyes.

Mr. Jordan was bewildered. Were his senses leaving him, or were his eyes playing him a trick? He was a dead shot, and he had heard the crash of the ball as it hit the animal, and had seen it fall.

Again taking aim he fired, and again came the dull thud of a falling body. He again reloaded his gun, and straining his eyes watched anxiously to see if it would reappear.

But all was silent, and nothing more was seen. Sleep by this time was banished from his eyes, and he awaited the dawn. It came soon, and as quickly as he could see, he climbed out of the tree and took his way cautiously toward the spot where he had seen the animal.

There, lying on snow, were two immense bears, both dead, killed at once by his unerring shot. While examining them he found on the foot of the larger of the two a ragged scar, where he had been caught in a trap and from which he had pulled himself loose.

Mr. Jordan knew then that it was an animal who had been most daring in his attacks upon the cattle and sheep of the settlement, and who had baffled every attempt to capture him. The smaller one was evidently his mate.

He then looked about him to discover his whereabouts, and taking a few steps towards a small open space in the woods, he looked from the hill into the valley below, and there, with his houseposts bathed in the morning sun, lay the village of Harrodsburg.

THAT LOST YEAR.

BY ALICE RUTH MOORE.

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ERRILL DUVAL was tried almost beyond his patience.

As he sat in his place at the cashiers desk of the bank, he moved restlessly on his seat, a scowl crossed his handsome face and darkened his sunny eyes.

It was the gay holiday season in New Orleans, and the fun and frolic of Mardi-Gras were at their height. The principal thoroughfares were thronged with pleasure seeking people; shrill voiced fakirs were crying out their wares, small boys were blowing horns of various degrees of discord, and fire crackers were popping on every side.

As the tumult outside increased, the impatient expression deepened on the young man's face. It was vexatious beyond expression. This evening of evenings, when he would have given worlds to have been by his pretty sweetheart's side enjoying the scene with her, and making merry with the rest of the light-hearted throng, to be held here away beyond banking hours to make up delayed accounts, was indeed a hardship.

But the work must be done, and he certainly could utter no audible complaint, since his superior in the bank sat by his side, working as hard as himself, and absorbed in pages of the big ledger which lay open before him.

Duval rose suddenly and went to the window which looked out upon the street, as he did so, the scowl vanished and in its place an amused smile played about his mouth. Strutting slowly and pompously down the street came a queer figure. It was short and stout, clad in innumerable skirts and shawls of all colors, men's shoes on the feet, the head wrapped round and round with a many folded, dirty, white veil and a face dusted with flour that shook itself upon the topmost black shawl. On one arm hung a huge tin can; suspended from this were three or four coffee-pots which jangled together as the figure approached. On the other arm was a big basket crammed with broken food and a big, greasy bundle was clasped against the breast. Duval recognized Kate West, a figure familiar for many years to all denizens of down-town New Orleans.

She was a mystery.

No one knew much about her, but it went as a sort of tradition that once she had been a great beauty, and that an unfortunate love affair had estranged her from her people, and had finally made of the former belle a mental and physical wreck, dependent upon charity for the necessities of life. Poor, crazy, half-drunken creature that she was, people pitied and were kind to her, after a fashion, though she was an un-failing target for the stones and missiles of all the children between Common street and the Old Basin. Some cloudy remembrance of former grandeur must have stirred still faintly in her brain, for every Sunday morning she presented herself promptly at ten o'clock mass at the Jesuit church and there in solemn state, knelt, stood and performed all the necessary genuflections with the fashionably dressed throng.

The smile vanished from Duval's face and unconsciously he withdrew himself further behind the curtains to watch the retreating figure.

"Confound it all," he muttered, "someone ought to

interfere with those children, it's a shame," for Kate was surrounded by at least a score of boys of all ages—worst types of gamblers—who danced and leered at her, tripped before and behind, shot off crackers under her nose, tied "nigger chasers" on her shawl and played such tricks as only American Arabs can invent.

For a few minutes after the noisy troop had disappeared, Duval stood listlessly gazing out the window, suddenly it seemed to him that the room was unusually quiet. He remembered hearing a slight sigh some moments ago, and then a cessation of the noise of turning pages; while idly wondering if his employer had fallen asleep, a strange, shrill noise as of filing struck his ear; hastily pulling aside the heavy curtain which had concealed him, he glanced at the large desk.

The head of the President had fallen across it, a stream of blood flowed from a dagger wound at the back of the neck across the books and upon the floor; one man was working diligently at the safe lock, the other—Duval saw all this at one glance, then he was senseless.

The next morning papers were full of the "ATROCIOUS CRIME!" "HORRIBLY GHASTLY DEED!" "BOLD BURGLARY!" etc., in all the startling type and seemingly necessary adjuncts of reports of crimes. Duval, at home, lay in bed, alternating heavy stupor with wild delirium. The policeman had found him that night stretched beside the window with a cruel bruise on his head, and at the desk, the lifeless form of the president. The safe was open and empty and despite the most careful detective search no clue to the murderer could be obtained.

It was a nine day's wonder, and then, after the fashion of all sensations, it was forgotten save in banking circles.

Merrill Duval lay hovering between life and death for many months, and when at last he rose from bed he was a mere wreck of his former self. He remembered no one but his mother. Even the girl whom he had loved so dearly was quite forgotten, and when she sought to call herself to his remembrance, he put her one side as though she was a stranger. They asked him questions about that fateful night, he only shook his head and muttered blankly; they brought him newspapers containing an account of the crime, he read them indifferently, nor did he seem to notice the fact that his own name figured prominently therein. To all questions which they put him, he only replied, "Kate, Kate," in a monotonous repetition.

The doctors shook their heads, who was Kate? and why did he so persistently refer to her? His mother positively affirmed that he knew no one by that name. One day when someone asked him to write his name he signed himself "J. West," it was a strange complication, no one could understand it.

The long year dragged itself away, summer's heat and bloom softened into autumn haze and again the crisp days of the Southern winter came. Merrill had not grown one whit better, but still lingered about the house, maintaining the same indifference to all outward things, caring for nothing save to stare at windows and gaze and gaze into the street until it seemed as though he would turn to stone. All efforts to rouse his interest or make him recognize anyone were unavailing, he would only shake his head and mutter something about Kate.

Again the holiday time had come, the streets were once more lively with the throngs of pleasure-seekers. Some few persons passing the gloomy bank would shudder instinctively as the memory of last year's crime came over them. In Duval's little home on Roman street, a small group had gathered about the first of the dusk of early twilight, and some futile attempts to be merry were made, but in vain, for the shadow of that other evening, just a year before, hung over the spirits of all.

Suddenly Duval grew restless, and rising walked to the front window and took up his old position of watching with strained, eager attention. The shouts of children, barking of dogs and popping of fire-crackers were heard in the distance, moving nearer and nearer and suddenly around the corner came the old familiar figure of Kate West, followed by the usual pack of gamblers and dogs.

Duval became very much excited, he threw up the sash and leaned out.

"Kate, oh Kate, is that you?" he cried.

The half-crazy woman stopped and blinked up at him with her bleared eyes.

"Oh, I've waited so long, Kate, so long," he continued, "but I'll get you yet!"

He would have jumped out of the window, but his father's strong arms held him. With a frightened cry the woman fled, followed by only half the jeering children—the others stayed behind to await further developments.

For a few minutes Duval struggled to follow, then he became unnaturally calm, in a flash the whole scene came before him—the counting room, the old man at the desk, the curtained window, Kate in the street, the strange noise, the dead man and that ghastly stream of blood. He put his hand to his head, staggered a few steps back and shrieked: "For God's sake Baker don't strike," and fell to the floor unconscious.

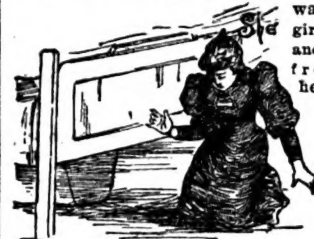
Three days later, Will Baker, one of the cleverest scoundrels in the country was in the Parish Prison charged with the robbery of the bank and the murder of the president which for a year had been such a mystery. At the trial the lawyers for the defence objected to the testimony of a man who had been practically insane, but the mass of evidence was so overwhelming, that towards the end the prisoner confessed.

Duval's mind soon grew as strong as ever it was, but the twelve months that intervened between the robbery and the sudden return of his senses always have remained a blank. The only time that the happy face of his wife is clouded or he seems at all distressed, is when reference is made to events which transpired during that lost year, of which he has no knowledge.

LOOKING UNDER THE BED.

BY HELENA H. THOMAS.

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was the bravest girl I ever knew, and yet she had from childhood the habit of so many of her sex—looking under the bed for a man. Let me tell you what she at last discovered. My friend Miss H. many years ago, left her home in the North for Boston. She was accompanied by her father.

Arriving at the "Hub" late at night they went at once to the rooms assigned them. They were removed at some distance one from the other, but my friend did not shrink from being left alone, though that was to be her first experience sleeping in a hotel.

I will tell the story in the words of Miss H., as this is no fancy sketch.

"I quite enjoyed the novelty of being alone in a strange hotel; after father left me I read for an hour or two and then prepared for bed. I am never timid, but clinging to my childish habit, so looked under the bed, though I had not the most remote idea of finding the man I had been looking for so long, but a real flesh and blood man would hardly have given me the shock I received, at seeing an old style coffin, big enough to hold me.

"Well, you know I am not one of the 'screamy' sort, but as I gazed at that thing I trembled as never before. What to do I did not know, for at first I did not contemplate sleeping over it. I looked about the room for some way of communicating with the office, but found the call bell broken. Then I opened my door, but it was past midnight and I saw no one, and

I knew not in which direction my father was. Going back to my room I seated myself to think it out, and said to myself at last: 'I have always boasted of my courage, now is the time to show it. If that coffin is empty it cannot harm me, and if it has an occupant it cannot be a living one, so in either case I am safe,' so without again looking under the bed I bounded into it.

"Sleep? No. I must admit, that my eyes seemed to have forgotten how to stay closed. They were wide open looking at that coffin under me. And I made a new discovery. I too had nerves, and found they were not a desirable possession. At last I said, 'This will never do, I must sleep,' and I then resorted to a never failing means of putting myself to sleep. You know my passion for algebra. Well, when I am wakeful and need sleep, I place before my mind's eye a difficult problem and working it out I fall asleep.

Accordingly in imagination I placed before myself a difficult task, and trying to solve it all memory of 'coffin' and nerves vanished, and I knew no more until daylight.

"Arising I again looked under my bed to make sure it was not a dream, but there it was in all its gruesomeness, even daylight could not soften the hideousness of it.

"My father soon rapped at my door, being a physician he seldom knows what fear is, so I said laughingly, 'Look under the bed papa.' He did so, and man that he is, he actually screamed as he did so. Turning to me with wide open eyes he said, 'Child, did you sleep over that? Why yes,' I said, 'it didn't harm me.' Then I told him how I could not raise any one, and how I reasoned it out and went to bed, etc.

"My father was very indignant. He left me, breakfast forgotten for the time being, and soon returned with the landlord. The latter was much excited and said as he entered the room, 'I must see it to believe it.'

"He was convinced beyond a doubt that it was no imaginary coffin. As he looked under the bed he said with a shudder, 'No money would have tempted me to have slept over that thing.' He rushed to the office and soon returned with the clerk who explained that a stranger had a few days before been found dead in the room, and that the undertaker had found the coffin first sent too short, had ordered another; in the meantime No. 1 was shoved under the bed and entirely lost sight of until I made the discovery.

"The landlord complimented me in the highest terms for what he was pleased to term unshaken courage in a 15 day job. 'Nevertheless,' I do not care to repeat the experience of finding a coffin under my bed."

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And lang syne.	Bachelor's fare.	Green sleeves.	Kitty Tyrrell.	Oh, Arabella.	Poor old naida.	The resolve.
Auld Grey Kirk.	Bessy's mistake.	Bessy's mistake.	Lord Aroon.	Poor old naida.	Petty Ike.	Tulochgorm.
Alice Gray.	Callie Herrin.	Cumby Claff.	Lord Lovell.	Petty Ike.	Paddy Snap.	This better so.
Bye and bye.	Captain Jinks.	Home so blest.	Lullaby.	Mary Blane.	Polly.	The ivy green.
Believe me.	Coal black Rose.	Lull's Victory.	Little flowers.	Money musk.	Rory O'Moore.	The cap of tea.
Betsy Baker.	Crookneck lawn.	Harvard home.	Louisa belle.	My sweetheart.	Robin Adair.	Ten o'clock.
Bryan Boru.	Dearest Mac.	Harvest home.	Lubby Dine.	None can tell.	Reel o' bogie.	The pilot.
Bobbin' around.	Ding dong bell.	I want to be a nun.	Lucy Neal.	None can tell.	Save the boy.	The watchman.
Bonnie Dundee.	Dolly Varden.	In my cottage.	Lugan's ball.	Old maid's cry.	Shule Agha.	Twilight dew.
Billy boy.	Do not mangle.	In the starlight.	Love, love, love.	Old King Calm.	Shabby gentel.	The watermill.
Bygone hours.	Do not mangle.	In the starlight.	Love, love, love.	Old King Calm.	Shabby gentel.	Unspoken.
Beware.	Do not mangle.	In the starlight.	Love, love, love.	Old King Calm.	Shabby gentel.	Unspoken.
Belle Brandon.	Do not mangle.	In the starlight.	Love, love, love.	Old King Calm.	Shabby gentel.	Unspoken.
Beautiful bells.	Do not mangle.	In the starlight.	Love, love, love.	Old King Calm.	Shabby gentel.	Unspoken.



SUNSHINE AND SYMPATHY FOR THE SHUT INS.

MY DEAR FRIENDS: While mid-winter shuts us in more closely than ever, still our thoughts are not confined, but may roam abroad, visit our friends, and through the medium of books in which others have written of their journeyings, may visit the four quarters of the globe. Our eyes may see many strange and beautiful sights, which imagination will paint almost as vivid as reality. Do not give up your interest in the outer world, dear friends, for the more you can fix your minds on something outside yourselves, so much the easier will your sufferings be to bear.

"Look up, not down! do you mind how the tree-top rejoices in sunlight denied to its roots? And hear how the lark gazing skyward is flooding all earth with its song, while the ground-bird is mute?"

Look forward, not back! 'tis the chant of creation, The chime of the seasons as onward they roll, 'Tis the pulse of the world, 'tis the hope of the ages, 'Tis the voice of the Lord in the depths of the soul."

"I want to thank those who have remembered me so kindly with letters and other tokens. I will answer those who sent stamps as soon as I am able, but I suffer so much. If you knew how much I appreciate, and how much good letters and tokens do me, you would not wait for me to answer. I have none of this world's goods, and am only able to read and write a little; have been entirely confined to my bed five years. Mother and I live alone in a small country place. Please remember me through the lonely winter. May God bless you all.

EMILY M. WHEATON, North Branford, Conn.

"Will some of the cousins write and send reading to a poor woman who is confined to the house, and alone most of the time?"

Mrs. E. R. PARKER, Box 25, Gladwin, Mich.

"Thanks from a warm, grateful heart for the 109 letters, reading, and other tokens of kindness from the cousins. I am sorry that I cannot reply to all. Oh, dear, kind friends, if you could only know what joyous emotions it stirs in my lonely hearts to read such words of sympathy, you would consider yourselves well paid for the trouble of writing 'only a letter.' I am now taking treatment at the Mineral Hot Springs, near the Membre river, and am improving greatly. I suppose that these springs are the best known remedy for rheumatism. But the furnished accommodations here are very few and poor. The building is adobe, and consists of 4 rooms about 11 by 12 ft., with dirt floors, a small window and a tiny fireplace in each, a half dozen bath-rooms, with wooden tubs, built like boxes, doors so narrow that one has to turn sideways to get into them, and dirt floors. I could not be taken into one of them, and have to live in tents, and have a pool fixed with a tent over it, in which to bathe. The place is managed by an Italian, who seems to have no conception of what is needed in the way of accommodations by invalids and the general public. Some white men are trying to get control of the place, and if they do, there will soon be better arrangements. Although the local papers praise this as an Eldorado for consumptives, I would not advise a consumptive to come here to make his home. He would only spend his money for high living expenses, with no assurance of benefit. Catarrh is more prevalent here than in any other place where I ever resided. All kinds of business is very dull.

MARY WHITAKER BARRELL, Lake Valley, N. Mex.

"I have room for me to tell my story. I have been laid up with rheumatism for 15 years, and for the last 4, nearly helpless. I have a wheel chair, and sit and sleep in it. Sometimes my husband and I lift me on to the lounge for a change. I am 62, but don't think I am old, for it was not for my helpless state, I would be as young as anybody. I am of a cheerful disposition, but I get out of patience sometimes. I would be glad of reading, or anything to pass the time; I am a great lover of literature. I pass many weary, heavy hours, for our circumstances will not admit of any extras, not even medicine always, and I have so much pain. I often wonder why I am left here, but it is for some wise purpose, and may the Lord help me to bear it.

Mrs. A. D. BERRY, Rockaway, New Jersey.

"I am a sufferer from spinal disease; when going to my work one day, my back slipped, and fell, hurting my back so that I have been an invalid ever since. Now I am dependent on others, so that I cannot have many things that I would like, and need. I would like to ask the cousins if they have any bits of ribbon, silks, lace, floss, or any of the thousand things that women turn into fancy work, and would send them to me. I am starting a sewing class to make both useful and fancy things, and the money which we earn is for missions. I think I can serve two ways in this, teaching the children to sew, and helping to spread the good tidings. Remnants of cotton or muslin would also be gladly received. Address: A. A. PURSE, care of Mrs. Carter, 314 Hibernia Bible Mission, Port St. Charles, Montreal.

"Dear friends, as I lie gazing out of the window of my country home this morning, thinking of you all, I am glad to be one of your number, not only to receive your cheer, but I trust that I may also be able to encourage you. I thank every one who answered my letter in May COMFORT. I have made many pleasant acquaintances, and it has shown me what a very large circulation our paper has. For 9 years I have had muscular rheumatism, so that I have had to lie in bed for weeks at a time; but for the last year I have been confined to my bed, as I have been much worse. But now, thank the dear Lord, I am better, and can sometimes walk about the house. Dear friends, do not forget me in these dreary winter days.

Mrs. H. W. BROWN, Kinde, Mich.

"Dear Shut-ins, I have a tender feeling for you all, having passed through the furnace of affliction myself. I have been a great sufferer for 8 years, confined to my bed nearly all the time. It has seemed that my sufferings were more than I could stand, but God never puts on us more than we are able to bear. I have been so near death that it seemed as if I almost felt the chilly waters, but God was with me in all my affliction. Three years ago God manifested His power by raising me from a bed of pain, where I had been 5 years, in answer to the prayers of many friends. For some wise purpose, I suppose, I was not restored to perfect health. I believe that all things are possible with God, if we would trust Him right. Dear afflicted ones, let us be cheerful, and when we feel the burden of life, and are racked with pain, remember the dear Saviour's promises to His children. Let us go to Him, and tell Him all our troubles, and ask Him to bless us, and give us patience to bear this weary life. If we are shut in from this world, we are not shut in from the eternal sunshine of God's love.

ELIZA W. ROOKER, Hurricane, Ark.

"Some time ago I wrote a letter asking for help and sympathy in my suffering condition, and to-day I write humbly thanking those dear ones who opened their hearts so freely to a poor soul. As far as my

afflictions are concerned, I am no better; but each day I gain more faith in the blessed Lord. How happy I am to-night, in my suffering and poverty, when I take up my little Bible and read the blessed promises. I can then sing with a happy heart, 'There is rest for the weary.' I have often heard people say that they shuddered at the thoughts of death; but I feel a sweet peace come over my soul, and can say, Welcome, death! rob this form of its earthly garb, and put on a robe of pure, spotless white. I do pray God to give me more faith and patience, for I know it cannot be long till I shall be singing sweet praises to God in the bright beyond. What a blessed thought! God so loved us as to prepare a place for us to dwell forever in supreme happiness. I thank God that He sent this affliction upon me, for I now spend day after day in sweet, silent communion and earnest prayer with the blessed Lord. It is the grandest thing in existence that we poor lowly beings can go to God in prayer with all our troubles and affliction. Take courage, poor suffering ones, for we shall not always be bound with the heavy chains of affliction. The day is not far off when God will send His angel, and break loose the iron links that keep us here, and then we will be forever free.

Mrs. W.

Good-bye, my dear friends.
Your affectionate,
AUNT MINERVA.

THE MARINER'S FRIEND.

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FIRST in importance among the mariner's instruments is the Compass. It has been in use many hundreds of years, and it is claimed, was first invented by that nation from whom so many wonderful discoveries have come—the Chinese. In any event, history states that in 1295 Marco Polo brought the compass from China to Italy. It is curious to note that, in the compass, this nation sustains its reputation for doing everything backward, according to European ideas, for the principal point of their compass is south.

The navigators of early times guided their vessels by the stars, but as they made few voyages and generally confined their journeys to portions of the coast with which they were familiar, they did not require so exact a guide as was needed in later years.

The compass made the discovery of a new continent possible. Without it, Columbus must have failed in his purpose. Baffled by new currents, blown about by varying winds, he could never have held to his course "Due West" without a sure guide.

The ship's compass is an entirely different affair from the little pocket compasses which landmen carry. Those, for instance, which are used in the United States Navy, have a card 7 1/2 inches in diameter which has bar magnets attached to it and which floats in a securely sealed bowl, in a mixture of water and alcohol—the alcohol prevents freezing save at a very low temperature. This bowl swings in gimbals—an arrangement of hinges which keep it level no matter how the vessel rocks—and the whole contrivance is placed within a "binnacle" or brass globe with a glass top, with lanterns at each side to illuminate the card at night. This is mounted on a stand and secured to the deck immediately in front of the wheel, where the helmsman can watch the card continually. There is a mark or line upon the stationary rim of the compass, to indicate the exact position of the ship's bow and stern, and in order to steer the vessel upon a certain course, say north-east for instance, the helmsman turns the rudder until the immovable mark indicating the vessel's head is opposite the point north-east upon the compass card. If the man at the wheel observes that the ship is varying from the course, he so alters the helm as to cause the bow of the ship to again coincide with the point of the compass that he is required to steer by.

The card of the compass has thirty-two points, and the intervals between each of the points are also subdivided into halves and quarters. One of the requisites of a seaman is the ability to "box the compass" or name over the various subdivisions correctly, for each point has a distinctive name.

There are many influences that cause deviation of the needle from the true north, such as atmospheric conditions, and electrical currents, as also the presence of iron which attracts it. In iron and steel ships they have an arrangement of "compensating magnets" which equalizes the influence of the surrounding metal.

The question generally asked is: "Why does the needle point north and south?" The earth may be said to be an immense magnet, and as all magnets have an attraction for each other, one end of a magnetized bar or needle will, if freely suspended, always point to the north pole of the earth, and the other end to the south pole. The nearer the pole the compass is brought the more it inclines or "dips," and if the actual pole were reached the needle would point directly down toward the earth.

ST. VITUS DANCE. One bottle Dr. M. M. Fenner's Specific always cures. Circular with cures. Fredonia, N.Y.

HOME-MADE DOLLARS.

A stamp sent to Mrs. Marshall Gray, Chapel St., New Haven, Conn., will bring ladies facts about Kitchen Kohnoor (Discovery for giving brilliant lasting polish to tin, brass, glass, gold and silverware) telling how to make money at home.



MOTHERS, and especially nursing mothers, need the strengthening support and help that comes with Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription. It lessens the pains and burdens of child-bearing, insures healthy, vigorous offspring, and promotes an abundant secretion of nourishment on the part of the mother. It is an invigorating tonic made especially for women, perfectly harmless in any condition of the female system, as it regulates and promotes all the natural functions and never conflicts with them.

The "Prescription" builds up, strengthens, and cures. In all the chronic weaknesses and disorders that afflict women, it is guaranteed to benefit or cure, or the money is refunded.

For every case of Catarrh which they cannot cure, the proprietors of Dr. Sage's Catarrh Remedy agree to pay \$500 in cash. You're cured by its mild, soothing, cleansing, and healing properties, or you're paid.

NAME ON 25
Lovely Cards,
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HOLLY CROOK, NORTH HAVEN, CONN.

CURE All Kidney Liver and Bladder Diseases at the patients home. Particulars Free. J. H. Dye, M. D. Buffalo, N. Y.

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FREE 100 TUNES To introduce them, one in every County or town furnished with a reliable person (either sex) who will promise to show it. EXCELSIOR MUSIC BOX CO., N. Y. City.

We manufacture the celebrated musical clock and box combined, arranged to play different tunes every time clock strikes, or can be used independent of clock, same as an ordinary music box.

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BOX JOINTS.
Don't buy a common looking silver watch when you can obtain for the small sum of \$1.50 a handsome genuine 14 karat gold plated hunting case, full engraved movement, a perfect time keeper, genuine full plate hands, finely decorated and ornamented, fully equal in appearance to the watches regularly sold by jewelers at from \$3.50 to \$5. In carrying this watch you have the credit of carrying a solid gold watch, as the plating process is so good that it is almost impossible to detect the difference. The engraving on the case is just the same as on the high priced watches, and in the very latest and largest patterns. Some will doubt our ability to be able to supply such a watch at this price, and to convince you that we mean just what we say, we make the following most extraordinary offer for next 30 days.

READ!
Cut this out and send it with your order, and we will promptly ship the watch to you by express C. O. D. with instructions to let the express deliver to you to examine it at the express office. If on examination you are convinced that it is a bargain, pay the agent \$4.50 and the express charges and it is yours; otherwise you pay nothing and it will be returned at our expense. We could not afford to make such an offer as this unless we were confident that the watch will not only please you, but be a surprise to you. Near in mind this price will be for 30 days only.

CHICAGO WATCH CO., CHICAGO, ILL.

EVERY LADY
HER OWN DRESSMAKER.

The COMFORT A, B, C DRESS-CUTTING SYSTEM,
Free, as a Premium.

Easiest to understand. Best and cheapest. Gives the quickest results with least trouble. No figuring. No calculations. No blunders. Most correct shape of any system ever devised.

Every lady can learn more at a glance, using this system, than by many hours' study of others. The first trial will secure its adoption. It is equally valuable in the home or to the regular dressmaker.

Gives full instructions how every girl and woman can make for herself fashionable and well-fitting dresses, waists, and basques with the greatest ease and speed. Most scientific and exact results with the least measuring.

HERE IS WHAT WE GIVE:
One Regulation Size Differential Chart,
One Dozen Sheets Pattern Paper,
One Well-made Steel Tracing Wheel,
One Ready-made Dressmaker's Tape Measure.

HOW DOES IT LOOK?
It is a heavily mounted chart over two yards long and two feet wide, having the different measurements all lined out for all kinds of garments, with Bust Measures from 25 to 46 inches. You get the Bust Measure of the person you want to cut garment for, and that one being the ONLY measurement required. Now it requires no DRAFTING, for all the different sizes have been calculated and drafted right on to the chart by experts who have made it a business for twenty years, and PERFORATIONS in the chart at each cutting point show just where YOUR size is to come by simply laying on a piece of COMMON PAPER and tracing along the line with a lead pencil. All you then have to do is to cut your goods by the pattern you have thus manufactured yourself—that is all there is to it. But remember, you will find everything on the chart in shape, style and build of garments you want to use, and if you have old wearing apparel you want to make over into stylish fits, you go by the same system in changing them.

It Costs no More to have a STYLISH FITTING GARMENT than a poor one, and you actually save 50 per cent on goods by using our system, it has been studied down to such a fine point by experienced draughtsmen. So it requires no mathematical calculations on your part at all (all other systems require a good deal), you just go by the plans all laid out for you. You will find it so SIMPLE, COMPLETE and PERFECT in all its patterns and departments that it can be acknowledged to be a requisite in EVERY FAMILY, while ALL OTHER CHARTS are so complicated and high-priced that they are entirely worthless to any but the most experienced dressmakers. OURS makes EVERY ONE a dressmaker in ten minutes. The regular price of charts alone is \$2.00.

But to every one who will get up a club of six subscribers for Comfort at 25 cents per year, each in advance, we will send one of these Comfort Outfits FREE, we paying all express and mailing charges. By showing a copy of Comfort to your neighbors, friends, and acquaintance, you can easily get up a club in one evening; for COMFORT, with its many improvements and new, original, copyrighted departments, now needs only to be seen to be appreciated. To those who do not care to go to the trouble of getting a club, we will send COMFORT for one year, together with one of these Outfits (all express and mailing charges paid by us) upon receipt of one dollar. This offer holds good for three months only.

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Dr. Checini's Electric Spavin Cure positively removes Bone Spavin, Ringbone, Splint or Curb in 48 hours without pain. \$500 reward for failure or slightest injury. The greatest wonder of the Nineteenth Century, astonishing as it does the entire veterinary world. Circulars and testimonials free.

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The Best Stomach, Liver, Kidney and Blood Remedy. Pains in Back and Limbs, Tired, Dragged Out, Nervous Feeling, Debility and Low Vitality Quickly Cured as well as Dyspepsia, Constipation, Sleeplessness, Liver-ness, Rheumatism or Catarrh. Sample Free for stamps. AGENTS PAID WEEKLY SALARY. \$1 box two months' supply! 1 glass. Try It and Be Well. ROOT, BARK & BLOSSOM, Newark, N. J.

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We claim, and we are prepared to prove that we have the best and surest remedy in all the world for the speedy and permanent cure of Dyspepsia, Indigestion, Biliousness, Constipation, Liver Complaint, Sick Headache, Nervous Debility, Rheumatism, and even Consumption in its early stages. So sure are we of the great and unfailing efficiency of our Remedy that we will gladly send a free trial package post-paid, to any reader of this advertisement who will send us his or her name and address. If it does not do what we claim the loss is ours, not yours. If you wish to regain your health write for a free trial package to-day. Address, EGYPTIAN DRUG CO. 66 Warren St., New York.

A Child's Love for a Doll.
HAS OFTEN BEEN COMMENTED ON.—READ ABOUT THE NEW STYLISH DOLLS.

Modern invention is always making startling improvements and the latest thing just brought out is for the young people who live away from the large cities. We have just secured sale of a new kind of dolls that are absolutely indestructible, and we show you in this cut here how they look; they are about 18 inches tall, and made of elegant colored goods. In getting this doll up we have overcome the great trouble of weight, which has made such a cost in the past when shipping by mail or express. These dolls are constructed so that you fill them with cotton, hair, or sawdust, sewing them up after receiving; it takes but a few minutes to do this, and you save nearly one dollar, and get a pretty substantial doll for almost nothing. They will last for years and be a joy forever to any miss who desires a handsome doll as nice as her own sweet self.

To introduce these goods at once, we add another million to "COMFORT's" eleven hundred thousand circulation, we will send one doll absolutely free (all charges paid by us) to every three-month trial subscriber enclosing 15 cents; two dolls, and two dolls 25 cents; 5 for 50 cts. Many make money selling these dolls. Send one dollar for twelve, and try it.

Address MORSE & CO., Box 25 Augusta, Maine.

PEOPLE BUY THEM BY THE HUNDREDS.
In ordering the second lot here is what one Lady says: 15 Concert St., Keokuk, Iowa.

MORSE & Co.,
Sirs:—Dolls received. Enclosed find money order, for which send me fifty (50) more of your indestructible dolls, express paid. Please send soon as you can, as I already have orders for a number of them. Mothers and children seem equally delighted with the dolls.

Respy, Mrs. W. H. FOUTS.

JUST THE THING FOR CHURCH FAIRS.
Rich Hill, Missouri, Nov. 29th, 1892.

MORSE & Co.,
Gentlemen:—Some time ago I sent an order to you for the Comfort and two Dolls, which I received. Finding them just as advertised, now enclose you an order for \$5.00 for which send me Dolls to that amount. The ladies of the M. E. Church wish to raise money that we have pledged for the new church (now being erected) and think we can make something on the Dolls. Send promptly if you please, as we wish to begin work at once, having an entertainment coming on very soon.

Very truly,
MRS. J. E. SIMCOCKY.



BY ELIZABETH SARGENT CURTIS.

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O cook well one must dress properly.

I don't mean that the quality of the food is affected by what the cook wears, but those who see her about her work relish the dishes she prepares much better if she looks dainty and neat.

The ideal cooking costume has been evolved by the directors of the Boston Cooking School, and it has been adopted by pupils and visitors alike.

This costume goes no farther than the cap and apron. Any dress may be worn, but the apron must envelop the wearer from neck to foot, and have full bishop sleeves buttoning around the wrist. There should be pockets and a belt.

It is better to make this apron of light print than of dark, and it is prettier made of white, like a barber's apron. It is no harder to wash a light apron than a dark one, and it is pretty sure not to be worn so long with out laundrying. It may be simply finished with a hem, or have a narrow edge of embroidery.

The cap may be made of a handkerchief, either with a plain hemstitch border, or with a colored edge of embroidery. It can be pinned and pinned into shape in a few minutes, by the aid of a looking glass, and it will prove most distractingly becoming. It can be unpinned and washed whenever needed. It protects the hair from dust and flying particles of flour, and it also keeps the stray hairs in place, and gives an air of refined neatness to the wearer.

The cook will find it most convenient to have a holder, hung by a long tape from the belt of her apron on one side, and a small hand towel fastened to the other.

You know how holders will get mislaid, and what a hunt there has to be for one just when it is most needed. It seems sometimes, as my little girl says, as though "they hid themselves on purpose."

Well, if the holder is fastened to the belt of your cooking apron, it can't get away from you, and it is there when you want it.

The same thing is true of the towel; you want to wipe your fingers so many times; if you have to go to the roller every time you take many extra steps that might be avoided if the towel was at your side.

And there is another economy. One that is most valuable to every woman; the economy of personal strength. I shall have something more to say about that at another time.

I think I promised to tell you about the various uses of potatoes and corn did I not?

I wonder if you know the possibilities of these two vegetables, almost the commonest ones we have. For since corn has been so successfully canned it is available in the winter as well as in the summer, and it forms the basis of many a palatable dish.

But to begin with potatoes.

I would have many of you know the value of a potato soup.

It is one of the nicest of the vegetable soups, the soups without stock, the meat basis of the heavy soups is called, and it is so easily made that it should often appear on the family table as a first course at dinner. It is extremely nutritious, and children especially like it. I have found its value in the country, when company has appeared unexpectedly to dinner, and the necessity of "piecing out" has been felt.

For a family of three the following proportions will serve, but the quantity should be doubled for more than that, and increased as the dining exists. The amount given here will make something less than a quart of soup.

Use three potatoes, one pint of milk—the richer it is the better for your soup—one teaspoonful of chopped onion, one stalk of celery, or one half teaspoonful of celery salt, one teaspoonful of salt, one-half a teaspoonful of pepper, one quarter of a teaspoonful of cayenne, one tablespoonful of butter, and one-half a tablespoonful of flour.

If you have time to let your potatoes soak in cold water half an hour before cooking, after they have been washed and pared, they will beat up all the lighter for it. You can do this always, unless you are making the soup to meet a sudden emergency. Have the water for cooking them boiling and salted, and cook them until they are very soft.

While the potatoes are cooking, put the onion and celery—if you use it—with the milk in a double boiler and cook. When the potatoes are soft drain off the water, and mash them with a fork, beating them until they are smooth and light. Add the seasoning and pour the boiling milk on, mixing well together. But through a strainer, and put the soup over the fire again in the double boiler. Put the tablespoonful of butter into a small saucepan over the fire to melt, and when it is bubbling add the flour, stirring it well in, but being very careful not to let the mixture brown. When it is perfectly smooth stir it into the soup, let it cook five minutes and serve very hot. If the soup is too thick add a little more hot milk.

You may add to the richness by using a pint and a half of milk, then put two well beaten eggs into the soup tureen, and stirring rapidly as you pour the boiling soup over them.

In the country where one has her own potatoes, rich milk, fresh butter and eggs, a soup may be made that cannot be equalled by any town soup. Just try this, some housekeeper in COMFORT'S circle, and see if I am not right.

I think this is as good a place as any to tell you of another simple and easily prepared soup, a corn soup.

For this you will use one can of corn, one quart and two gills of milk, three tablespoonfuls of butter, two tablespoonfuls of flour, one generous teaspoonful of salt, one quarter of a teaspoonful of pepper, one tablespoonful of chopped onion, and the yolks of two eggs.

Put the corn into a chopping tray or a wooden bowl and mash it as fine as possible, then put it in the double boiler, with a quart of milk and cook for fifteen minutes.

Put the butter and chopped onion in a small frying pan, and cook slowly for ten minutes, taking care to

keep the pan where the onion will not brown. Add the flour and cook until it is smooth, stirring constantly, still taking care that the mixture shall not brown. Stir it into the corn and milk, and the seasoning and cook for another ten minutes. Then rub the soup through a strainer, and return to the fire. Beat the yolks of the eggs well, and add to them the two gills of cold milk. Put this mixture into the soup and cook one minute, stirring all the time.

Here is a nice dinner dish that may be made from the green corn in summer, and the canned corn in winter. One quart of raw sweet corn, or a can of corn, one pint of sliced potatoes, a two inch cube of fat salt pork, one onion, one teaspoonful of salt, one saltspoonful of pepper, one large tablespoonful of butter, one pint of milk, six crisp crackers.

When you use the green corn scrape it raw from the cob, and boil the cobs twenty minutes in water enough to cover them; then skim them out. Pare, soak, and scald the potatoes, by pouring boiling water over them.

Cut the cube of pork into small pieces, and fry the onion in it, after slicing it. When the onion is well cooked strain the fat into the kettle with the corn water. Add the potatoes, corn, salt, and pepper. Simmer fifteen minutes, or until the potatoes and corn are tender. Add the butter and milk, and serve very hot with crisp crackers.

In using the canned corn, proceed as in the above rule, using plain boiling water, in place of the corn water, a pint is sufficient. This dish is known as corn chowder.

To crisp crackers, split them—butter crackers are the best to use—spread them with butter, put them, the buttered side up, into a pan, and brown in a hot oven. They are as nice with oyster stews and vegetable soups as with the chowders.

To come back again to potatoes.

There is nothing more delicate for an entire or side dish, than potato croquettes.

Now don't be frightened, there is nothing difficult about making them, and when once you have learned to make and shape and cook potato croquettes, you have virtually solved the whole mystery, and can cook all kinds of these dainty entrees.

You will use one pint of hot mashed potatoes, and just here let me recommend to your use a vegetable strainer, which makes all vegetables smoother than any amount of crushing will do. You see what a simple little appliance it is. Put the vegetables in, and press the top down until the mass is forced through. I think the masher or strainer costs about



fifteen cents, and it can be used for potatoes, squash, turnips, every vegetable indeed that needs to be mashed, and it saves strength, time, and labor. Another economy.

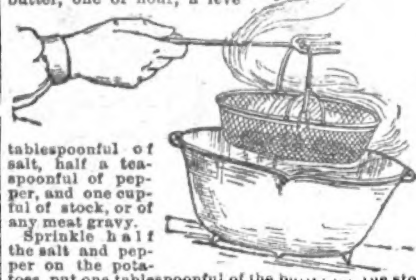
But to return to the croquettes, for which we already had the pint of hot mashed potato, you will also require a tablespoonful of butter, half a saltspoonful of white pepper, a speck of cayenne, half a teaspoonful of salt, half a teaspoonful of celery salt, a few drops of onion juice, and the yolk of one egg. Mix all the ingredients together except the egg, and beat until very light. When slightly cool, add the yolk of the egg, and mix well. Rub through a sieve and add a teaspoonful of parley, chopped fine. Shape into round smooth balls then with rolls. Roll in fine bread crumbs, dip in beaten egg, then roll in bread crumbs again. Fry in smoking hot lard in a frying basket, one minute. Drain and serve in the form of a pyramid.

When you fry use a deep iron or granite kettle, and a wire basket that is small enough to fit down into the kettle. The fat should be hot enough to brown a bit of bread while you count forty. Before you begin to fry the basket should be plunged into the hot fat to grease it, the croquettes should then be placed in it so that they will not touch each other. Hold the handle of the basket with a long fork, and plunge it quickly into the fat, but do not drop the handle, because if the fat should be too hot, the basket can then be raised quickly, so that the contents cannot burn.

After the croquettes are brown hold the basket an instant over the fire, shaking it slightly until all the dripping has stopped. Then put the croquettes onto unglazed paper to absorb the fat, and keep them hot until ready to serve.

A nice way of preparing cold potatoes is to make the dish known as "hashed brown potatoes."

For six people use one quart of cold boiled potatoes cut into small cubes, two tablespoonfuls of butter, one of flour, a level



tablespoonful of salt, half a teaspoonful of pepper, and one cupful of stock, or of any meat gravy. Sprinkle with the salt and pepper on the potatoes, put one tablespoonful of the butter on the stove in a frying pan, and when it becomes hot, put in the flour. Stir until smooth and brown; then gradually add the stock and the remaining salt and pepper. Cook for three minutes; then add the potatoes, and cook for five minutes, stirring three or four times with a fork, and being careful not to break them.

Now put the second tablespoonful of butter on the stove in another frying pan, and when it becomes hot, turn the potatoes into this pan spreading them lightly. Cook for ten minutes in a rather hot part of the stove, being careful that they do not get burned. When the mixture becomes browned, fold it like an omelet, and turn out on a hot dish.

It is better to have the potatoes a little underdone for this dish, as they will keep their shape.

Still more delicate is the hashed brown potatoes in cream sauce. Use one quart of cold boiled potatoes, cut into cubes, one slice of onion, two sprigs of parsley, one slice of carrot, three tablespoonfuls of butter, one level tablespoonful of salt, a quarter of a teaspoonful of pepper, two scant tablespoonfuls of flour, one pint of milk, and one cupful of grated bread crumbs.

Beat the flour and two tablespoonfuls of the butter

together, in a saucepan. Add the onion, parsley, carrot, and half the salt and pepper. Heat the milk and pour it gradually upon the contents of the saucepan; then set the pan on the stove. When the milk begins to boil, set the pan back where the milk will only simmer for five minutes. Season the potatoes with the remainder of the salt and pepper, and put them in a shallow dish. Strain the hot sauce over them, sprinkle the crumbs over the dish, and dot them with the remaining tablespoonful of butter. Set the dish in a rather hot oven, and cook for twenty minutes.

I think you will like stuffed potatoes for luncheon or for tea. Bake potatoes of equal size; when done and still hot, cut off a small piece from the end of each potato. Scoop out the inside. Mash, and mix with it half the quantity of cooked meat which has been finely chopped and highly seasoned with salt, pepper, and a bit of marjoram or summer savory, mix with butter or cream, and fill the skins, which must have been carefully emptied, to a little above the top of the opening. Set in the oven to brown the tops, then serve at once. Any cold meat that you chance to have may be used.

Next month I shall tell you some ways to use macaroni, and give you some receipts for meat cooking, using inexpensive cuts.

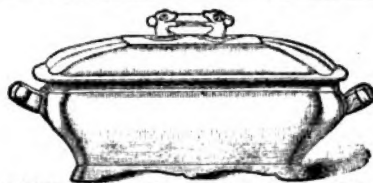
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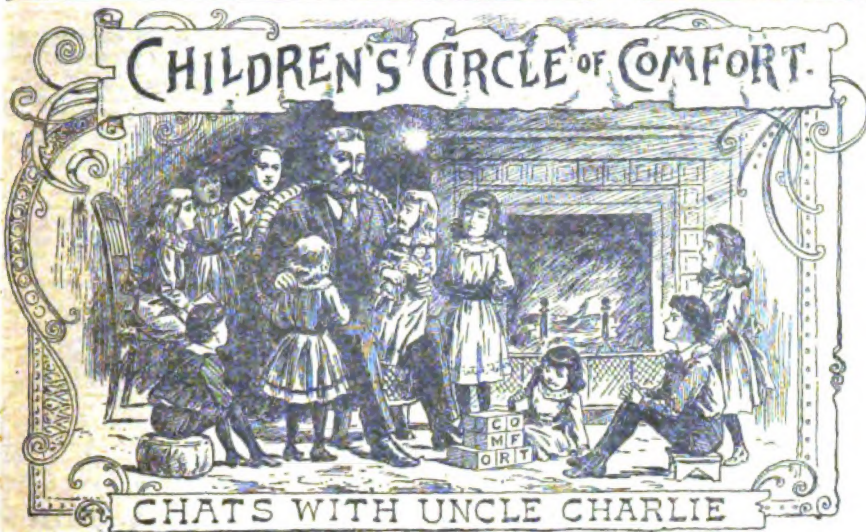
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EVER mind your games for a little while, children, let's talk about the 14th of February, Valentine's Day. Why is it called Valentine's Day? It is hard to say exactly. It is generally supposed that the custom derived its origin from St. Valentine, a bishop who was martyred in Rome many centuries ago, but there is no proof of it. It is most probable that the choosing of Valentines is a relic of nature-religion, a primitive religion in North-Western Europe centuries and centuries ago, and that it sprang from a recognition of the peculiarity of the season when, about this time of year the birds choose their mates and thence came the custom of young men and maidens choosing their Valentines or special loving friends for that day. Let us follow the ancient custom the 14th, and this is the way we will do it. All the boys and girls in the neighborhood buy a pretty valentine and put his or her name in it. Then, on the evening of the 13th all meet at a house or hall, and put the boys' valentines in a box and the girls' in another. The girls will, one by



one, take a valentine from the boys' box, and the boys from the girls' box, and the name of the girl or boy on the valentine will be the valentine of the girl or boy the next day. Of course you can send valentines to girls and boys who cannot be present. There will be lots of fun and surprise if you will try this old custom Valentine's Eve.

BEAN BOWLING.



HERE is an hour's game at which you can become right smart, if serious. A girl and boy as partners against another girl and boy, take 25 beans



each. The girl takes a bean and snaps it across a smooth table at the openings in opposing boy's hand. Every miss goes to opponent, every one put through, opponent gives back to the girl's partner and one more besides. When the first girl has snapped all her beans (25), then the second girl snaps at the opening in her boy opponent's hand. When the boys have repeated the effort, count up beans and those which have the most are winners. It is not silly—try it!



I HAVE always been able to remember forms, events and names as well as numbers and words by associating my eyes with something familiar or interesting. Yes, children, when I thought I should miss certain parts of my lessons my eyes always pictured the ugly spots of the pages where the words or figures were located and I could help my mind out to a correct solution. The words concave or convex bothered me until I drew this picture.

Better train your eyes and memory than to jot things down in a book. My father could mentally take seven measures of a tapering mast at different parts and never get them wrong. By cultivating this sense, when he became a public man he often corrected speakers for quoting wrong dates or misquoting authors.

SINGULAR THINGS IN NATURE.



SOME of my circle of children who read COMFORT are enjoying the soft atmosphere of a southern clime while north and west others are skating and coasting, and yet the sun seems as near to one as to the other. Queer, ain't it? Did you ever stand near the foot of a mountain on a hot summer day and see snow on the top of the mountain? I have. The snow was nearer the sun than I, yet it was colder on the mountain peak. Why? Because the sun's heat rays passed through more moisture nearer the earth and the moisture, like a magnifying glass focused under the sun, intensified the heat. The air was not so moist away up in the ether.

Here is another curious fact. If you were in a well fifty feet deep, at mid-day, you could look up to the heavens and see the stars though the sun were shining. The reason being because your horizonline is diminished and the light of day is excluded from view.

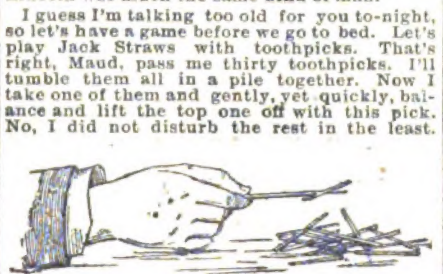


THE 22nd is a holiday. Why? George Washington's birthday. has been written for over a



century that "George Washington never told a lie." Now this may be true and if so there is only one reason why it is so, and that is because he was trained to the duty until it grew to be a habit. One can get into the habit of being good as well as bad and it was so much easier to be good than bad that he got to be very happy and made all about him agreeable. All through Gen. Washington's private and public life his open, frank, gentlemanly manners impressed everybody, inasmuch that it is doubtful if there has been so many truly pure, public men hold government offices as there were during Washington's administration, such was his influence over men. I think "Abe" Lincoln was much the same kind of man.

I guess I'm talking too old for you to-night, so let's have a game before we go to bed. Let's play Jack Straws with toothpicks. That's right, Maud, pass me thirty toothpicks. I'll tumble them all in a pile together. Now I take one of them and gently, yet quickly, balance and lift the top one off with this pick. No, I did not disturb the rest in the least.



Now the next and soon. Ha! ha! I removed sixteen of them and jostled the rest. Now Maud you try it. Good, there's one. Gently now—that's right, go slow, very slow; you are very patient. Good! It has taken you 14 minutes. Yes, Frank, you try it, while I put a log on the fire, it seems cold here. Did not do it, Frank? Well, try it to-morrow night. Perhaps I'll have another game ready

for you before St. Patrick's Day, the 17th of next month, and when the March winds are blowing up from their winter slumber, stretching and shaking out the chills, we will devote an evening to the bran new game.

A funny story?

Well, here is an old one, but it may be new to you and at least a million of Comfort children. Forrest, the great actor, a half century ago, used to take a long walk alone after his performances, for the purpose, he used to say, "of resting my nerves." One night, after playing the part of King Richard III at the Federal Street Theatre, Boston, he strolled down to the wharves and as he approached a huge woodpile he thought he saw the figure of a man creep along beneath its shadow. Forrest was about to shout out to the man in his terrific bass voice, but concluded to wait the man's intentions. Suddenly the man jumped at Forrest who, instead of being surprised, remarked in a high-keyed voice:

"Pray sir, who are you?"

"I am a highwayman and want your money," replied the man.

"Well sir," fairly roared Forrest, in his most terrible deep voice, "I'm a pirate and haven't got any."

The highwayman, in great fright, took to his heels.

There, put up your blocks and books and scamper off to bed. Good-night, my treasures, sweet sleep and happy waking.

UNCLE CHARLIE.

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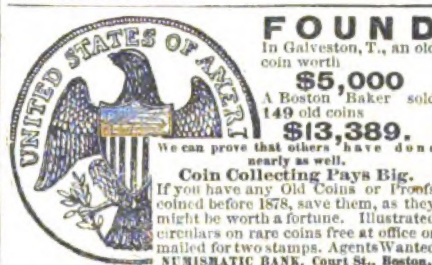


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THAT WOMAN'S CURSE.

BY SAM DAVIS.

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"Will you be kind enough to tell me where Mrs. Ainsworth lives?" Turning I saw a face at my elbow that belonged to the sad voice I had just heard.

It was that of a man who had some heavy burden on his mind. His eyes looked into mine, searching for an answer and beseeching for it.

"I know no such person," I replied, preparing to move on. The stranger grasped my arm.

"You certainly must have seen her somewhere. She was medium height with gray eyes and brown hair."

"I can't keep track of all the women in San Francisco who have gray eyes and brown hair," I replied impatiently.

"She lived on Mission street once and—"

"I have no time to bother with either you or Mrs. Ainsworth."

I dismissed him roughly, but as I looked back the tears were coursing down his cheeks and the face, which was stamped with care, bore the impress of hunger as well. But what struck me as odd was his dress, when taken into consideration with his features. He wore a broadcloth suit, immaculate linen and was freshly shaven. Despite his costly attire, his pale, shrunken features told the story of a long fast. There was nothing rude in the man's address. He was polite, nay almost supplicating in his request to me to reveal the whereabouts of the woman. I had treated him rudely. In fact I had used language I forbore to repeat here, for it was Christmas night and I had been drinking freely. It seemed to me that the best apology I could make to him would be an invitation to take something warm, for there was an unpleasant dampness in the air and the wind was chill.

"Come with me my good fellow and have something."

He looked wistfully at the saloon a few doors away and shook his head.

"I mustn't go in there."

"Well old boy let's go into the restaurant and try some oysters."

He stepped toward the restaurant with a look of intense gratitude, but to my surprise on reaching the door he paused and with a sigh shook his head.

"Have you eaten lately?" I asked in a tone intended at the same time to be one of inquiry and apology.

"Nothing for two days. Good-night sir."

He bowed as he lifted his silk hat, and his "good-night" was uttered in a tone of studied dignity. In a few moments he had disappeared. I walked away in the opposite direction wondering what could be the reason of such extraordinary conduct; but I could frame no hypothesis to reach the case. Then I recalled a diamond ring that had gleamed from his hand and a heavy gold chain that hung from his vest.

Yet he said he had been two days without food while his face might have indicated a fast of three. I walked along slowly, pondering on the matter, when some young men, walking quite rapidly, overtook me.

"Wonder what the old fellow wanted of Mrs. Ainsworth?" said one.

"Had better be hunting a square meal," said another as they passed on. So it seemed that he was still importuning people for information regarding Mrs. Ainsworth. But it was useless to speculate on the mystery, so I dismissed the subject from my mind altogether and gave myself no further concern of it.

On the succeeding Christmas I was in Virginia City. It was nearly midnight and on C street near the corner of Union I noticed the figure of a man crouched against the wall, with his back to the driving gusts. It was one of those wild Nevada nights with the wind sweeping down the rocky slope of Mt. Davidson, delivering upon the city swales of sleet and snow. The poor fellow stood where the tempest seemed fiercest, and bent under the weight of the storm. As I neared him he stepped out with, "Do you know where Mrs. Ainsworth lives?" I started back at the words, for it was the same request and the same face that had confronted me in San Francisco a year before. The voice, if anything, was more hollow, and the sunken cheeks and suppliant eyes were more pronounced, as the glow of the street lamp intensified the sorrowful shadows of his face.

Was this some restless spirit sent to haunt my Christmas nights? As he stepped forward he reached out his hand as if to detain me if I did not pause. It was indeed the same man and his dress was, if anything, more costly than before. He was wrapped to the throat in a heavy cloak, trimmed with rich fur, yet he shivered with cold and trembled from head to foot.

"I told you a year ago I did not know the woman." He peered into my face a moment and pressing his hands to his temples turned away in despair. Determined to solve the mystery of the man's fruitless search for Mrs. Ainsworth, I hastened after him; but he only quickened his footsteps as I approached and was soon lost in the darkness. I passed the rest of the night in inventing theories for this strange man's actions, and tried to reconcile his well-to-do attire with his pinched face and lust of hunger in his eyes. If ever a face carried with it the eternal stamp of sorrow it was this man's. The autograph of suffering and remorse was written broad and strong across it. Every line told its separate story and the whole was a record of misfortune that made a bulky volume of human misery. But the more I pondered over some lucky solution of the enigma the more was I lost in a maze, and again I was compelled to reluctantly relinquish it.

A year later I was again in San Francisco, pursuing my vocation as a reporter. When I was detailed to

call on John Goldweight, California street, and interview him on a matter connected with a financial crisis pending in the stock market. He was one of the leading capitalists of San Francisco and authority on all matters of finance. I found him at home seated in his parlor and surrounded by his family.

He received me with a condescending forbearance which men of capital generally assume toward members of other professions. He talked volubly on the subject under discussion and in the midst of the interview the clock struck the half hour. As the stroke died in the air he lifted his glance to the mantle and his wife's eyes rested anxiously on his features. Silently he rose from his chair and starting for the hall began putting on his overcoat. His wife followed quickly and placing her hand upon his shoulder said imploringly, "Are you going out tonight?"

"I am."

"Then I must be at your side; if you will not tell me the secret of your absence from home every Christmas, I myself must solve it."

He turned and looked her full in the face for nearly a minute. The children stood staring at the couple in the hallway. With the tears welling in her eyes she begged him to say what business took him out in the storm in the night. Disengaging her arms, which were about his neck, by main strength he pushed her roughly back, and with a moan she sank down in the hallway. At the maid of the house rushed to pick up her mistress, I realized how undesirable would be my presence and stepping over the woman's body in the threshold I followed Goldweight down the steps. He took my arm as I reached him and we walked together toward Market street in the face of a searching wind that made me button my coat about me. I refrained from conversation and neither spoke a word for several blocks. It was near the Baldwin Hotel that he paused an instant and stepping up to a man who was hurrying past he stopped him with:

"Can you tell me where I can find Mrs. Ainsworth?"

I reeled back from my companion and stood there mute with astonishment. It was the man I had met twice before hunting for the Ainsworth woman. There was no mistaking him. In the house not half an hour before his face had worn a cheerful expression that told of content and good living, but now as he turned it toward me it was the same that I had seen previously, clouded with the shadow of remorse and care whose presence I had tried in vain to solve. The transformation, the man struck me with a terror for an instant only for the new gathering instinct was strong upon me at once, and I determined now to fathom the secret of his life. So I pulled him away from the man he had accosted, although it was hardly necessary as the stranger, who was in liquor, had turned upon him so boorishly and roughly that he must have been glad to leave him; yet as the man passed up the street my companion turned and looked after him wistfully and sorrowfully. "No use, no one cares to give me the information for which I search." Then taking my arm again he walked on apparently with his head bowed and that old look of want and remorse gathering in his face at every step.

"I will find Mrs. Ainsworth for you," I said.

He stopped, and putting both hands on my shoulders, stared at me wildly. His eyes blazed with that unnatural brilliancy that I had seen in lunatics and I began to wonder if he might not offer me violence. His gaze seemed to search every corner of my brain to ascertain if my utterance was prompted by resolve, and seeming satisfied with the inquiry resumed the walk.

"If you'll help me find Mrs. Ainsworth there is no request that you may make that I will not grant."

"Where did she live when you last heard of her?"

"In a house on Mission street."

"Do you recollect the number?"

"There is no necessity for that, the house is not there now."

"If I knew the number the house used to have it would aid me in my search."

"I tell you it's no use to try and find it that way, I've tried."

"Let us step into the restaurant, it is warm and pleasant and we will have some ale and oysters." I turned towards the restaurant but he clutched my arm in a hard grip. "I can't go in there, it's part of the curse that's on me. I can't do it, don't ask me. I can't touch meat or drink, the sight of it will drive me mad." He pulled me away almost by force and drawing me into the recess of the building told me the misery of his life.

As I have met you three times successively on this anniversary, fate seems to will that I should reveal to you my strange history. Five years ago there was a widow occupying one of my houses on Mission street. Her month was up Christmas eve and passing I called to collect the rent. What prompted me to go in as I did I could never understand. It was about eight o'clock when I entered the house and she had just put her two children to bed. When I demanded the rent she explained that she had been disappointed in getting some money due her for sewing, and the last few dollars she possessed she had spent for a few Christmas presents for her children. As she spoke she glanced at the stockings in the chimney corner where they hung bulging with trinkets. There was also a fat turkey on the table and other preparations for the morrow's feast.

"I don't know what demon of avarice took possession of me at the time, but when she had finished talking I told her that Christ was not born on Christmas day to afford people an excuse for robbing their landlords. She gave me a sharp and hot reply, and her words maddened me to that extent, that I seized a basket on the table and filling it with the provisions set aside for the Christmas feast, as well as stockings in the chimney, I carried them from the house into the street. She burst out crying and begged me between her sobs not to rob her children of almost the only solace and enjoyment they had had in a year. She vividly described the expectations the coming of the day had aroused, and pictured the disappointment they would experience in the morning, in discovering that Santa Claus had utterly ignored them."

"She fell before me on her knees and begged that I would relent. I believe the woman would have pawned her immortal soul to have seen those stockings hanging back alongside the mantelpiece. I am a stubborn man and never more stubborn than then. I spurned her from my feet, and after a few steps I looked back and saw her kneeling in the doorway with uplifted hands invoking the curse of Heaven on my wretched act."

Here Goldweight paused, and leaning against the building placed his hands over his eyes as if to shut out every recollection of his act of avarice. Composing himself with a great effort he continued:

"Every Christmas eve I hear that dreadful curse ringing in my ears. Her words are still in the air, they mingle with, and fill with discord, every Christmas chime. Do you hear the bells now? Listen. What to you is the glad tidings of Christ's good will to men, is to me the wrangling of a thousand discords, mingling with the never dying words of the curse which floats on the wings of the bells, rising, falling, lingering in the air and dying out just as the bells linger and die out."

"May he never taste food or drink on Christmas. May his meat choke him, may his drink strangle him, may the pangs of hunger gnaw at his vitals, may anguish and remorse rend his heart, may he never know a thrill of Christmas joy or feel the blessing of warmth. May the God of justice double the curse on him every year for his whole lifetime. Amen."

When he had finished repeating the words of the curse, he looked about him like a hunted beast. A moment later the music of the Christmas bells loaded the crisp air with melody. He placed both hands to his ears and shrieked in mine:

"Here it comes, can't you hear that woman's frightful malediction?"

As he listened his face was convulsed in agony and he nestled up to me like a child, cowering and shivering meanwhile.

"Give me the number of the street," I said, "and I will find the woman and ask her to lift the curse."

"But the number is gone."

"Impossible."

"Yes, when I reached the corner I repented and went back but the house was not there. I wandered in the street all night, but it was gone, the house, the number, everything."

"This is only an hallucination, man, come with me."

"I have tried again and again, it is part of the curse that I will never find her. Every Christmas I get colder and hungrier and the torture is more than I can tell to mortal man. I cannot mingle with my family on Christmas, and my wife is almost beside herself with anxiety as to my whereabouts and the cause of my absence."

As we walked along we overtook a happy throng of bright faced children, with their laughter rippling everywhere. There was a nipping wind in the street

[CONCLUDED ON PAGE 7.]

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Birds choose their mates February 14th.

The Amethyst is the lucky stone for those
born in February.This is the month in which to start bulbs for
window blossoming."The Salem Witch," a story by Miss Helen M.
Winslow, one of the bright women writers of
the country, will be published in the next issue
of COMFORT. It is very clever and original, and
the attention of the readers is specially called
to it.The editor of COMFORT calls attention to the
feast of good things that is presented this
month. Mr. Davis' story is strong and conveys
a forcible moral. The Nutshell Stories are un-
usually good, and the various departments are
carefully and interestingly handled. It is the
intention to make improvement visible each
month, never being quite satisfied until the
highest standard is reached. Every member of
every household is appealed to, from the child
to the grandparents.The recent gift of a million dollars to the
University of Chicago, in addition to his
previous princely donations, by John D. Rocke-
feller of New York, is a welcome exception to
the general practice of the country's great mil-
lionaires, and an encouraging sign. And it is a
most practical recognition of the fact that edu-
cation of the masses is the surest way of reliev-
ing poverty and of elevating the standard of
American citizenship. Such deeds cannot fail to
impress upon the nation that labor and
capital are not enemies, but mutually depend-
ent.News of the serious illness of the Hon. James
G. Blaine is received with genuine regret by
the entire country, for it is universally con-
ceded, by men of every political faith, that he
is unquestionably and by far the greatest states-
man of the present generation.Although there is no hope of his recovery, his
wonderful vitality has given him a hold of life
which few men have possessed, and has battled
bravely against a disease before which almost
any other man would have succumbed. The
sympathies of his friends and of his fellow
townsmen are with him and his family at this
last crisis.Just before the opening of the New Year, a
most important conference was held between
President Eliot of the Harvard University and
the directors of the Harvard Annex, regarding
the union of the two. President Eliot, who has
been on record as steadily opposing the admis-
sion of girls to Harvard, had evidently met with
a change of heart. He spoke very favorably of
the plan of annexation, and said that the only
argument he was prepared to use against it was
a financial one. The University was at present
quite unable to undertake so large an increase
without more funds, but if the Annex could
bring \$250,000 as a dowry, he would use his in-
fluence to have the two institutions made one.
The women who had this matter at heart, Mrs.
Louis Agassiz, the wife of the famous natural-
ist, Mrs. Alice Freeman Palmer, the ex-presi-
dent of Wellesley College, and one of the
officers of the New Chicago University, and
Miss Katherine P. Loring, one of the wealthy
and beneficent women of the nation, went at
once to work, and the sum is already nearly
raised. If this union is consummated, it will
be the most important educational movement
that the country has ever seen, since the ques-
tion of the higher education has been agitated.The sudden death last January, of General
Benjamin F. Butler, removes from a wide sphere
of usefulness and activity, a man long known
to the people of the United States, as a soldier,
lawyer, politician and writer.He was born in Deerfield, New Hampshire,
Nov. 5, 1818. His boyhood was passed in theusual manner of the average country boy, his
time being divided between learning the three
R's, reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic, at the dis-
trict school and doing chores on his father's
farm. He earned his own living after he was
eleven years old. He was studious and self-
reliant, and early showed great independence
of thought and action. His father and mother
were good old-fashioned New England people.
He was a conspicuous figure in the Civil War,
and was intrusted with important missions by
President Lincoln.He was many years a member of Congress
from Massachusetts, of which State he was
governor in 1883, was candidate of people's
party for presidency in 1884 and was very suc-
cessful as a lawyer and politician, but looked
upon his military career with the greatest
pride. His ancestors were soldiers and his
house at Lowell contains the swords and spurs
of four generations of his family.He has probably made more enemies and
stronger friends, and been more maligned than
any living American. He is reported to have
said that he had been called every name under
heaven but a fool. He was a man of the people,
and made his way from a poor boy to great re-
nown. He was a large-hearted, generous man,
and greatly loved in private life. Ever mind-
ful of the widows of our soldiers, in many in-
stances he gave advice and prolonged legal ser-
vices with no charge whatever.Many of the cities and larger towns of the
country are organizing "Current Events Clubs."
In most places these are exclusively women's
clubs, but there is no reason why they should
not be made up of both men and women. The
only reason why they have been confined to the
one sex, is that they are held afternoons, when
the men are engaged, and that they are purely
educational, and deal with matters with which,
presumably, men are already acquainted. The
usual way of conducting them is to have one
woman of broad education, larger leisure, and
opportunity for study, carefully read the daily
papers, and cull from them all matters of public
interest and present them in a condensed form to
the other members, who are thus kept in touch
with the large world of affairs, and understand
what is the trend of events of importance. After
the paper is read, questions are asked and discus-
sions follow. Not only are national affairs
treated of, but international questions are con-
sidered, and the effect of one action upon
another is studied. The broadening influence
of these clubs is felt wherever they exist.
Women get out of the rut of every-day life, and
find something of interest beside neighborhood
gossip. They come to realize that the place in
which each one is set is but a small, an in-
finitesimal part of the world, and that they can-
not judge of events or of persons, by their own
dwarfed standard. They learn tolerance and
patience. That is the effect it has on them-
selves, and it has a reflex influence on those by
whom they are surrounded. They can talk in-
telligently with their husbands and brothers on
matters which concern the public welfare; they
can better teach the children from the knowl-
edge which they are acquiring, and they will
prove better neighbors just from having this
wider outlook, and clearer vision. There is
another way of conducting these clubs, which
by the way are weekly or fortnightly, as suits
the convenience of the members. Instead of
having one person do the work of hunting up
and formulating events, let the members take
turns in doing it. In this way each one will
have the mental stimulus of study and research.
No community is so small that a Club of this
kind may not be supported, and if it once is
given a foothold, it will remain a permanent
institution. COMFORT tries to give the events
as they occur, and studies to instruct. With
this paper and a "current events" club, a com-
munity should be bright and intelligent beyond
the average.

Candlemas Day, February 2nd.

WRITTEN FOR COMFORT.

"If Candlemas Day be bright and fair,
The half of winter's to come and fair;
If Candlemas Day be wet and foul,
The half of winter is gone at Yule."UNIVERSAL
superstition that
good weather on
February 2nd indi-
cates a long, cold
winter and a bad
crop, and that foul
weather is a good
omen, has lasted
for many ages.Candlemas is derived
from the ceremony which
the Church of Rome dic-
tates to be observed on
this day; namely a bless-
ing of candles by the
clergy, and a distribu-
tion of them among the
people. This was a custom for many centuries,
and in many places churches continue to ob-
serve it.In Scotland it is an universal practice for
children attending school to make small pres-
ents of money to their teachers.The master sits at his desk with an expres-
sion of mild civility, and each child lays his
offering down before him. The boy and girl
who give most are called the King and Queen.
A holiday is given them, and, if he be generous,
the teacher invests a part of his gifts in sweets
which he divides among the children.The day is sometimes called "Ground-hog's
Day" among country people, as they say he
peeps out of his hole on Candlemas Day, and if
he finds the sky gray, walks abroad; but if he
sees the sun shining, he draws back into his
hole.A German saying is: "The shepherd would
rather see the wolf enter his stable on Candle-
mas Day than the sun." Therefore, there is to be
hoped for.Certain plants are connected with certain
days, and the snow-drop, called "The Fair
Maid of February," has always been associated
with Candlemas.

The decorations of Christmas are supposed

to be removed by Candlemas Day, an old
superstition being that any greens remaining
after February 2nd would bring misfortune."Leave not a single branch behind,
For Superstition's touch to find,
As many branches as there be,
So many Goblins shall you see."

SAINT VALENTINE.

Written for COMFORT.

BSCURITY veils the
origin of St. Valentine's
day.St. Valentine lived in
the third cen-
tury, and was
a priest at
Rome, but
why his name
should have
been given to
a festival
sacred to
Cupid and
Hymen will
always re-
main a mystery.There was for-
merly a notion
that on this day
birds select their
mates, and an im-
aginary influence
was over the hap-
penings of St. Val-
entine's day. For
instance, one tra-
dition was that the
first unmarried
person of the other
sex met on St. Valentine's morning was the
destined wife or husband.A forward miss in 1754 wrote to a friend as
follows: "Friday was St. Valentine's Day, and
the night before, I got five bay-leaves, and pin-
ned four of them to the four corners of my pil-
low and the fifth to the middle; then if I dreamt
of my sweetheart we should surely marry
within the year. But to make it more sure, I
boiled an egg hard, and took out the yoke, and
filled it with salt; and when I went to bed ate
it, shell and all. And would you think it—I
never closed my eyes!"The practice of choosing a Valentine is men-
tioned both by Chaucer and Shakespeare, and
the custom of sending written valentines as a
method by which the bashful lover may de-
clare his passion dates back many centuries.
One of the earliest known writers of Valentines
was Charles, Duke of Orleans.On the 14th of February it is customary in
many English villages for the children to as-
semble and go about from house to house, the
residents throwing them wreaths and true lov-
er's knots from the windows. The children
usually select the youngest boy to march ahead
of them, and call him St. Valentine.An old English poet wrote the following lines
upon the day:"Hail, Bishop Valentine! whose day this is,
All the air is thy diocese,
And all the chirping birds thy choristers,
And other birds are thy parishioners.
This day more bright than other days doth
shine—
Because it is thine own, Saint Valentine."

THE STORY OF THE STICK.

Written for COMFORT.

HE custom of carry-
ing a stick began in
the Eleventh Century,
and was a style set by
the fashionable dames
of that period.In this Nineteenth
Century everyone has
a right to carry it,
ornamented according
to his fancy, and it is
neither a sign of com-
mand, nor an emblem
of power.During the reign of
Louis VIII the cane
reached the height of
its popularity and was
carried by courtiers
and ladies. At this
time the "Sarbacane"
made its appearance.
This was a hollow
stick, and the beaux of
Paris filled it with
sugar-plums and sent
it to the lady they were desirous of pleasing.When Lafayette returned to France from America
he presented himself at Court with a very long one,
and from that time the larger the cane the more
fashionable was the man who carried it.

The sword cane and the dagger cane are similar.

The head
of the can-
dle, and by a quick
pressure on a concealed
spring a dan-
gerous
weapon is in
readiness in
time of dan-
ger. These
cane are, as
a rule, per-
fectly plain.
Modern
etiquette de-
clares the
cane out of
place at
visits of cer-
e m o n y,
though this
prohibition
seems a
trifle unne-
cessary.The man-
ner in which
a man car-
ries a cane
in a way in-
dicates the
manner of
man he is.
It has been
said that at
twenty a
youth car-
ries a switch,
at thirty a cane, and at sixty a stick.Cane are made from every kind of wood, from
ebony, rattan, from sharks spines, and from varnished
leather.During the first centuries of the world the stick
was a material symbol of authority. An ancient
legend is that Adam gained his empire over the ani-
mals by use of the stick; and certain philosophers
have asserted that the ape knows its use, and try to
prove by this that man is only a developed orang-
outang.For many years the stick was the only weapon of
war, and the man who could wield the largest club
inspired the greatest veneration.The Bible speaks of "The mighty ones who led
their troops with a staff." But the cane no longer
distinguishes the gentleman from the common citi-
zen. It has become democratic and is carried by all.
The story of the stick is doubtless the story of
civilization.

UNIQUE.

One of the first Catalogues of the season to
make its appearance is that of Wm. Henry
Maule, Philadelphia, Pa. A large number of
cash prizes are offered to buyers and planters
of Maule's seeds. The magnitude of the busi-
ness which this catalogue describes may be
estimated from the fact that the names of nearly
200,000 persons who buy Maule's seeds are on the
books of the firm, and they are live men and
women of to-day. See advertisement, page 7.Two Sister
School Teacherstell in an interview in the *Daily
Chronicle*, of Marion, Ind., about a
remarkable investment which they
made in Griffith, Chicago's new fac-
tory suburb. How theyInvested
\$100 Each In Lotsabout a year ago, when the town
was being laid out. It then had
four railroads, the oil-pipe lines—
and prospects.They Soon
Sold for \$2,000.This seemed almost like finding money to
them. Having greatest faith in Griffith,They Then
Bought a Blockof the best residence property, and
decided to hold it until Griffith grew
up. This was less than a year ago.

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free a copy of this interview and
the testimony of ten newspapers
relative to Griffith's unequalled rail-
road and fuel facilities. Write for
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month you can buy a lot.Elmer and Jay Diggins & Co. FOUNDERS OF
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Contributors must without exception be regular subscribers to *Comfort*, and every contribution must bear the writer's own name and post office address in full.

Original letters only, which deal with matters of general interest will be published. They must be as brief, plain and correct as the writers can make them and may vary in length from one hundred to four hundred words. Only letters of exceptional merit and interest may exceed the latter limit. Contributors must write on one side of their paper only.

Every month a number of prize monographs composed of the writer's initials, will be awarded to those sending the best contributions. These monographs, which will be most desirable ornaments for stationery, cards, etc., will be printed in connection with the respective letters, and new electrotypes of same will be mailed, post paid, to the prize winners. All communications must be addressed to Aunt Minerva, care of *COMFORT*, Augusta, Maine.

FEBRUARY PRIZE WINNERS.

Lucy A. Beedy, Robert J. Bauman,
Sam H. Cohn, John H. Hull,
Lena L. Woodill, Nellie A. Decker,
Wm. Langley, John M. Casey,
Henry Richardson,

DEAR NEPHEWS AND NIECES:

I am sure that the installment of letters which I present to you this month will show you better than any mere assertion could do, how scattered the *COMFORT* Cousins are. They stretch hands of friendship from Nova Scotia to California, from Vermont to South Carolina, and they all have something of interest to tell. These are the kind of letters I like, and surely with all our wide circle we should have plenty of them. Coming, as we do, from all parts of the country, and representing every line of thought, there must be many differences of opinion. But all subjects which would bring out these differences should be carefully avoided. Controversies should not be indulged in, in the correspondence, for this is not a forum for debates, but a place where the Cousins meet to exchange courtesies, and to entertain and instruct one another. Neither is it an "intelligence office," where personal affairs may be discussed, or private appointments made.

I hope that the letters will grow better and better all the time, and that not only the nephews and nieces, but all the readers of *COMFORT* will turn to them as an interesting feature of our most interesting paper. I am sure you will all aid me in the effort of bringing our department to the high standard which our editor has set up for us all. In view of the excellence of the letters, additional prizes are offered.

Yours most affectionately, AUNT MINERVA.

In this practical age all women, especially housewives, are interested in any industry which will add a few dollars to the yearly income, and I am glad to give the readers of *COMFORT* a bit of my experience in silk culture.

The first year, having been supplied with a few eggs of the moth of the silk worm, by a neighbor, I fed the worms more for the purpose of gratifying my woman's curiosity of seeing how they grew and spun, than from any pecuniary idea. And an interesting study I found them, as will you, my reader, if you undertake the work. Indeed, I found the labor of feeding so light, that I resolved the next year I would rear silkworms for the sale of the cocoons.

I now had several thousand eggs. A letter to the Secretary of Agriculture brought me five thousand more. My daughter, thinking she would raise a few, just to study them, also wrote for, and received, five thousand, of which she turned nearly all over to me. I was literally deluged with eggs.

It is generally thought that the worms must be fed on mulberry leaves, but the leaves of the osage orange tree are found quite as good; and as this tree is quite extensively grown for hedge, in all the central and southern States, there is no lack of feed.

The eggs must be kept in a cool place, to prevent their hatching, until the leaves appear.

About the sixth of May, I brought out my eggs, placed them in a room of moderate and even temperature, and in twenty-four hours, my eggs were replaced by as many little brown worms, as small as the finest cambric needle and not over the thirty-second part of an inch in length.

I now spread over the worms pieces of tarleton, upon which I scattered the tender leaves of the osage. Not much longer than it takes to write it, did it take the almost invisible mites to make their way through the tarleton and on to the leaves. From that moment began the process of silk making. For convenience, I then made trays of laths, placing several hundred on a tray.

The excrement, together with the uneaten portions of the leaves will accumulate in twenty-four hours so that the trays must be cleaned out. To do this I spread over the worms another piece of tarleton the size of the tray, placed on this fresh leaves, and my worms were soon on top, eating greedily. I then lifted off the tarleton and cleaned my trays ready for use again.

As the worms became too large to make their way through the meshes of the tarleton (as they will in a few days) I substituted for it mosquito netting. By the time they could no longer crawl through the meshes of the mosquito netting, they were large enough not to be smothered by laying quite large branches upon them; then branches and worms could be lifted off together. My worms made a large and rapid growth, and were from two and a half to three inches long and an inch in circumference. Just about spinning-time, the worms hatched from the eggs sent by the Department of Agriculture began to show signs of disease, and died off rapidly. Those hatched from the eggs of my own raising seemed free from disease and spun themselves up for their last long sleep.

My great loss caused by the diseased worms, took all the profit from my summer's light and pleasant labor, but I am convinced that the silk culture can be made profitable to those who have household cares, and yet have time for some light labor that does not call them from home.

LUCY A. BEEDY, St. Michael, Neb.

This letter is specially commended as helpful in its

suggestions to the many women, young and middle-aged, who are trying to find some home industry which will prove remunerative. The problem of money earning is a vexed one, and every aid at solution is anxiously studied.

I have been a reader of *COMFORT* for several years, and think it the best paper I have ever read. Our little town is situated in western Iowa, on the forks of the East and West Boyer River, and surrounded by gently sloping hills and beautiful valleys. The soil is very rich and productive, and yields large amounts of grain, fruits and vegetables. The corn crop especially predominates in this section of the country, it being a common occurrence for one farmer to raise from 5,000 to 10,000 bushels. It may be of interest to know how the corn crop is harvested. It is not cut up and placed in shocks as it is in eastern States, but is allowed to stand in the field until about the middle of October, when it is considered dry enough for husking. Then the scene of activity begins, which often lasts until Christmas, and even longer. Men with teams and wagons may be seen in the field at daylight, extracting the golden ears from the soft, dry husks, with a speed that would seem almost incredible to the eastern farmer. Any ordinary man can husk 50 bushels, while experts husk from 75 to 125 bushels in a single day. I have even seen young ladies who would husk from 75 to 100 bushels a day.

Corn huskers are in great demand, and earn from one dollar and fifty cents to three dollars a day, according to their ability. I consider corn-husking one of the most exhilarating and healthful occupations of the farm.

ROBERT J. BAUMAN, Denison, Iowa.

I am glad of the initial words of approval which this cousin gives, and I can assure him that *COMFORT*'s editor has better things in store for him and the other readers than have ever been given.

URING this time we frequently hear the politicians say, "Another district heard from." So possibly you will say, when this letter from far-off California reaches you. Though I am in California's great raisin centre, I will reserve for some future time any account that I may wish to give of the raisin industry.

My letter to you this time is to describe a lion hunt now in progress, about eight miles from here. It is not a real lion, as the school children say, which is being hunted, but a species of panther called the California lion. We are in a valley surrounded by hills. It is on the side of one of these hills that the hunt is in progress. Like Scott's Minstrel, the lion is the "Last of all his race," and so is being vigorously hunted.

During the last two weeks we have noticed fires on the side of the mountain. Each night they seemed to come nearer together, until to-night there are five fires brightly burning in a little circle. To-day we heard that the lion had been driven into a thicket by the four young men who are hunting it.

Knowing the danger attending the attempt, none of the young men can be induced to enter the thicket to dislodge the beast. This special animal is quite an epicure, he having an insatiable appetite for fresh pork. As the owners of the hogs cannot make any satisfactory arrangements with Mr. Lion, they have decided that he must be killed and, no doubt, by the time you receive this, he will have gone to the "Happy Hunting-Ground" of the California lion.

SAM H. COHN, Auberry Valley, Fresno Co., Cal.

California is warmly welcomed, and I hope the writer will keep his promise and tell us about raisin culture. A gentleman who is familiar with California says that undoubtedly the "lion" is that fiercest of the panther tribe, the cougar.

I am in hopes to see all the *COMFORT* Cousins at the World's Fair. Our Vermont Building will be a curiosity in many ways. The walls will be constructed of blue, white and variegated marble taken from the quarries at West Rutland. The building will be in the Queen Anne style of architecture, one story high, with a round tower at the right of the main entrance. The cornices of the windows will be of Vermont oak, polished and elaborately carved, and the main entrance will be through a portico which will be supported by two pillars of Barre granite. The inside of the building will be finished in every kind of stone found in the State. The walls will be ornamented with views of Vermont scenery and portraits of her most noted citizens.

Vermont's exhibit will be very large and interesting. The skeleton of an enormous whale found a few years ago near Lake Champlain, will be on exhibition; the finding of this skeleton more than 200 miles from the coast and 90 feet above sea-level, leads to many questions.

Animals and birds peculiar to this State will be exhibited, also over 1,800 varieties of plants and flowers. Mrs. Potter Palmer has invited the women of Vermont to make an extensive exhibit of home-raised honey and maple sugar and also antique articles. The cousins must not fail to visit this building while attending the fair.

JOHN H. HULL, Brandon, Vt.

Thanks; the Cousins will be charmed to accept the invitation. Those of us who are so fortunate as to visit Chicago during the year will learn much of other's homes by the various State Exhibits. The World's Fair will be a great educator to those who visit it in the right way.

Have you room in your charming circle for another niece—this time a Haligonian lassie, who hails from a city on the shores of the great Atlantic. If so, I shall endeavor to tell the cousins something about my home.

Although Halifax is not famous for its magnificent edifices, it can boast of beautiful scenery. This fact has endeared it to all lovers of nature, and so it should be, for as Cowper says, "God made the

country but man made the town," and Nature, the work of God alone, should be dearer to the hearts of His children, than that performed merely by human power.

The early history of our city is one of romantic interest, but doubtless all are familiar with the facts, so it is not necessary to relate them. It occupies a commanding position on one of the finest harbors in the world, and as it is the chief naval station of Great Britain, in the Western Hemisphere, gallant fleets are always in port.

The city slopes up from the water-side to the Citadel Hill, an elevation of 250 feet which was begun by the Duke of Kent, father of our illustrious Queen, and since has been made one of the finest fortresses in the world. The signal flag-staffs of the fort give it the appearance of a three-masted ship, and in the centre of the hill is a deep moat, surrounded by a massive wall. A magnificent view of the city and neighboring suburbs is obtained from this spot.

Near the Citadel is the Public Garden, comprising 17 acres, beautifully laid out with walks and floral designs. Now and then, during the summer evenings, military concerts are given and the scene is like fairyland. The grounds are illuminated with colored lights and on a small lake in the centre, fire-works are displayed.

Quite near the Gardens is an old cemetery containing a monument which is a large arch supporting a huge line—erected to the memory of Welsford and Parker, Nova Scotia heroes of the Crimean War. Here also is the common grave of fourteen officers of the war-ships Chesapeake and Shannon, the story of which all know.

Few cities can present so beautiful a drive as that through our Point Pleasant Park—on the one side the broad Atlantic, on the other the quiet beauty of the winding Northwest Arm, which is bordered with elegant villas. In the old war-times a heavy chain was stretched across this inlet to prevent the passage of hostile vessels. The ring to which it was attached still remains.

There are many interesting points that I could describe, but my letter is already too lengthy. If you wish I will write again and tell about Prince's Lodge, the residence of the Duke of Kent when stationed here, the various fortifications, the rocking-stone, the Dingle, and also the "red-coats" and "blue-jackets," which perhaps will be of interest to my cousins in the neighboring republic.

LENA L. WOODILL, 23 Carleton St., Halifax, N. S.

The Haligonian cousin is warmly welcomed to the circle. Her letter is very interesting and we will all be glad to hear from her again.

Will you allow me to enter your circle and tell you of a boat-ride I had last spring. I seem to hear a faint "Yes" so will proceed.

We Dakota girls do not often have the privilege of boat riding. This season, however, the lake-beds

have been filled with water. Early in the spring my sister and I decided that we must have a boat-ride. A boat was not obtainable, as there was no use for them most years. So we set out to search the place for a substitute.

After much looking about we found a "stone-boat." My sister said that would do, and I, because I knew of nothing else, groaned and consented.

We then got something which we called "oars," which are indescribable.

We were obliged to get a small brother to assist us to launch our "boat," and soon were sailing on the deep. I omitted to add that we had placed a wash-tub on the "boat" as a preventive against wet feet.

For a time "all went merrily as a marriage bell," but suddenly our craft came to a standstill. Vigorous efforts with the "oars" failed to move the obstinate "boat." Clearly it had caught on something in, figuratively speaking, "mid-ocean." What could we do? We called to my brother who was watching from the shore, but he emphatically denied any assistance, thinking the water was too cold.

But something had to be done, as the tub threatened every moment to overturn.

We finally decided we must wade to shore, and wade we did. Fortunately for us, we were not on an ocean or even on a sea, but only on a lake-bed.

We escaped with nothing worse than severe colds, but that was our last, as well as first, boat-ride. Perhaps we were easily conquered, but the water was cold.

Down by the shore of the lake-bed lies the "boat," where the small brother brought it when the water was warmer. By its side the "oars" are peacefully resting. Long may both "boat" and "oars" rest, undisturbed, in peace.

NELLIE A. DECKER, Roscoe, S. D.

This bright letter suggests to me the idea that some of the Cousins might tell us of some of their special sports. Those in Canada, for instance, might give us a description of snowshoeing or tobogganing. You must remember that in a family so widely separated as ours, what is most familiar to some, will be actually novel to others. Let that fact guide you in writing your letters.

I live in the dear old city of Charleston, the "City by the Sea." Our city has undergone the trials of two wars, has been wrecked by cyclone and nearly destroyed by earthquake. But we are still here,

and livelier and better than ever before.

Last week was our "Gala Week," held every year to commemorate our recovery from the terrible earthquake of 1886. One of the best features of it was the reproduction of the storming of Fort Sumter by the Federal Fleet in 1863. Two floats, built to represent Fort Sumter, were anchored off the battery. Fort Moultrie was garriooned by the German Artillery and the Gatling Gun Squad. The tug-boats were the fleet. When the cannon belched forth its thunder and smoke and the bombs burst in the air with a deafening noise then I thought that I could realize how the armies feel when they march up in the face of such guns.

Saturday we went over to Sullivan's Island to visit the Fort which is named after the gallant Moultrie, and saw the grave of Okeola, the great Indian Chief who died there. During the week I went over the new United States dynamite cruiser, Vesuvius; she has three dynamite guns, each fifty-five feet long and throwing a shell weighing one thousand pounds a mile and a quarter; also she has three Hotchkiss rapid-firing rifles, firing twenty shots a minute and capable of effectually repelling any attempt at boarding by means of small boats. We also had

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Hunting the Polar Bear.

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FAR to the north and where the earth is always covered with snow and ice is the haunt of the Polar bear. During most of the long winter he sleeps coiled in a ball hidden away in some burrow he has made in the snow or ice. But when in the short summer of those latitudes the ice which has covered all the sea in great smooth sheets or piled high in hummocks, breaks up then the Polar bear is about in search of prey and sustenance for its young.

The Polar bear grows to a size never attained by the ordinary brown bear, although sometimes surpassed by the Grizzly of the Rocky Mountains. He is often seven feet long. He is a vindictive creature and not at all likely to run away from one attacking him. Therefore, any one hunting him either for meat or for his skin or for sport is pretty certain to find plenty of adventure and to find his heart-beats growing quicker and more violent.

Let us picture to ourselves the scene spread before a traveler who recently sailed among the ice-fields and who had the fortune to find and shoot several white-bears. All about in the distance are low hills covered with snow, while occasionally between high cliffs a glacier or frozen river flows on slowly, huge masses breaking off forming the icebergs which as they float away to the south assume all sorts of grotesque shapes. Sometimes they look like great cathedrals with turrets and spires glistening in the sunlight; sometimes they look like great castles of the middle ages with battlements and towers, or at other times simply floating islands of ice. Nearer by is the sea with cakes of ice floating upon it.

There upon a cake not far away is a female bear with two cubs. The mother is fishing for her offspring for often she dives and brings great mouthfuls of fish. Now from the adjacent shores three or four of the adventurers and hardy natives set out in their frail skin-covered boats making their way as best they can among the floating ice. They are armed only with spears. In the meanwhile the white sportsman is preparing to join in the sport and a boat is made ready for him. The way is long and the open channels turn and twist so that the bear can easily escape if she wants to. But she turns coming directly toward the hunters. She came to a broad open channel wherein were the natives with their canoes. They paddle on toward the bear having in readiness their iron-barbed spears. When the first man is within reach the bear leaps toward him. The light canoe is overturned before the man can strike, the huge paw of the bear holds down the man until he is drowned. The others are too far off to aid. Then another canoe and its occupants; but now the sportsman is within gun shot. Quickly raising his rifle to his shoulder he fires. The ball goes straight to its mark. The huge creature struggles, then blindly swims toward the ice while all the water nearby dyed with her blood. At last the final flurry comes and the bear dies. Then the great carcass is lifted on the ice.

A fine trophy—the white skin—is added to the collection of the traveler and the natives have a rare feast of fresh meat; but there is one sorrowing Esquimaux woman whose husband will never return to her.



HUNTING THE POLAR BEAR.

He was an earnest advocate of civil service reform and the removal of partisanship from the departments of the government, laying down his term the foundation for the present system of examinations. His veto of the Chinese Exclusion Bill, as being a gross violation of international justice and courtesy, is an example of his liberal and broad-minded foreign policy.

He was devoted to benevolent and useful enterprises, and especially interested in methods of prison reform.

His home life was particularly happy and tranquil, being surrounded by his family and his universally beloved wife, now deceased, a woman of the finest qualities and principles. While in the Executive Mansion, she had the moral courage to uphold her convictions in the face of tradition and custom, and never permitted the use of wine at the White House table. Despite the adverse comment her act was subjected to. The example was a wholesome one, given by a gentle Christian woman, whose motives, at least, no one questions.

We close this sketch of the life of a gentleman, scholar, soldier and ruler, with a reproduction of his signature, written especially for the readers of COMFORT by him, but a few short weeks ago, and which was intended to accompany an article upon his life, instead of the notice of his death.

FOR AND ABOUT WOMEN.

A lady in Florida raises her own tea from the plant and declares it to be finer than any imported.

The matron of the Sherburn, Mass., women's prison has introduced the raising and spinning of silk in that institution.

The youngest mistress of the White House was the wife of President Tyler, who at the time of her marriage was only 20. The next youngest was Mrs. Cleveland, whose age was 22.

The great relief for the overburdened lives of women is in the simplification of home cares, of dress, and of food. If women themselves do not lighten their own burdens, who shall do it for them?

Many women have found profitable occupation of late years as real estate brokers, landscape gardeners, and architects. There seems to be no field of employment now-a-days in which women may not support or distinguish themselves.

After Twenty-Four Years.

By A. TURNER.

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THE night of November 20th, 1869, a body of Spiritualists were holding their regular monthly meeting in their rooms, on the third floor of a building situated on the north-west corner of Boylston and Washington streets, in the city of Boston, Massachusetts.

The meeting had been one of unusual interest. Raps of strange import had been distinctly heard, and the party separated about midnight. Among those present were two prominent detectives, one of whom is still living in Boston.

When these two men left the room and walked down the first flight of stairs together, stopping on the first landing, in front of the entrance of the Boylston Bank, to light their cigars.

"Small danger of thieves getting into this bank, with people coming and going all night," remarked one.

"Mighty safe bank," responded his companion; and they left the building together.

At that very moment five robbers concealed in a room next to the bank, were breaking their way through the partition wall to the safety vault.

So quietly did they work, and so cautious had been their movements that they made scarcely a sign or sound and their presence in the building was totally unsuspected.

It was a Saturday night, and they had been at work during the entire session of the Spiritualist meeting. Now they rested until the people had left the building, and then continued their nefarious work.

Twice they nearly gave it up as useless, and then urged on by their leader, returned with new energy to the task of boring through the wall, which they had carefully padded to prevent the sound of their tools from being heard.

It was five o'clock Sunday morning before they finally succeeded, and they were then too much exhausted to rejoice over their success.

There were two vaults in this bank. In one the funds were kept and in the other the boxes of depositors.

The men had bags ready for their plunder, the gold and notes were soon stowed away in them, and the gang prepared to leave the building.

But they had overlooked the depositors' boxes. All except their leader, Worth, who, saying he had forgotten his overcoat, left his friends on the stairs and hurried back.

He secured many thousands of dollars worth of jewels, but these he did not turn over to his companions.

The remainder of the plunder was equally divided and the men separated.

The plans for this successful robbery had been made with great care.

In October two men had hired the room adjoining the bank, and started an office for the sale of bitters and patent medicines.

There was a partition in this shop, and while it looked very substantial to the casual visitor, it was movable.

It was so placed that the robbers could be shielded from view while at work. They were able to locate the vaults exactly, to take their measurements, and to decide upon just the right time when they could work to the best advantage.

Saturday night would give them a start of twenty-four hours. It was Monday morning before the robbery was discovered. By that time the robbers had separated, and were covering their flight as carefully as possible.

Adam Worth, the leading spirit, had mysteriously disappeared. The other robbers were traced, and one or two captured, but he could not be found.

Years went on, and Worth, who was a young man at the time of the robbery, had grown old. He had lived in London, in Paris—wherever life had offered him amusement. Unsuspected by his associates, his apparent wealth had given him a certain influence and importance among his acquaintances, who little imagined that the quiet gentleman, who said but little and who lived so simply, was in reality a thief, with a large reward offered for his apprehension.

After twenty-four years of safety he had little fear of discovery.

But the law has an all-enduring memory. Adam Worth had not been forgotten, and in November, 1892, a cable message to the United States from Berlin, stated that the Boylston Bank robber, Worth, was in custody!

He had avoided detection all these years to fall into a simple snare set for him by a suspicious police officer—another proof of the saying that "Murder will out."

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Rutherford B. Hayes

One of the only two ex-presidents, died at Fremont, Ohio, January 17, of heart failure, at the age of seventy. He was born in Delaware, Ohio, and went to the common schools, and then to college, where he distinguished himself in mathematics and debate. He was noted as a hard student and also as being a young man of remarkably pure, high moral character, singularly free from the various vices young men are commonly addicted to. His character in this respect will bear the careful study of all young men—even of those whose only desire is to succeed in a worldly way—as showing that these high qualities bring a gratifying reward in after life.

He took up the study of law, and in 1845 was admitted to the bar, locating shortly thereafter in Cincinnati. His law practice, though lucrative, was never very extensive.

While in Cincinnati he was a member, in common with many other men whose names afterward became household words in America, of the Literary Club, and when the war broke out a company of soldiers was formed, of which Hayes became Captain. More than forty members of this club company afterward became officers, some of high rank. General Hayes' advancement in military honors was rapid. He was a leader of desperate sorties and adventurous undertakings, combining rare personal courage with great good judgment, and was many times brought to the notice of the nation by the frequent recommendations of his superior officers of "Promotion for bravery in action."

While in the field he was elected to Congress, despite his refusal to leave his dangerous command, for the stump, in his own interests. He was a conspicuous figure in Congress and retired to take the governorship of Ohio, which honorable office he has held at three different times during his life.

In 1876 he was pitted against the late Samuel J. Tilden, in one of the most acrimonious contests for the presidency in the history of the United States, and was declared elected amidst wildest excitement, and the threats of some of the most bitter of his political antagonists. The strong law-abiding sentiment of the people, however, prevented any outbreaking and President Hayes spared no effort during his reign to soften the animosities of the campaign.

The administration of President Hayes, while marked by no special brilliancy was, nevertheless, clean and able. Mr. Hayes had the wisdom to draw about him as advisors one of the strongest cabinets that any president has ever had. During his administration and by his influence the Federal troops were withdrawn from the South. Although this action at first created some feeling in the President's party, it nevertheless proved to be one of the wisest steps taken by the government since the war, and those who were disposed to criticize him soon came to see the justice of the action.

The Pratt Institute, in Brooklyn, N. Y., has a class in washing and ironing. The girls are thoroughly taught everything connected with the subject, in a room specially fitted up with set tubs, gas stoves for heating irons, and ironing boards.

Within the last twenty years there have been 328,000 divorces granted. This seems appalling until we learn that there were almost as many golden weddings celebrated, while the number of silver weddings exceeds the divorces considerably. Marriage shows the smallest amount of total failures of any business or profession entered into by the human race, the proportion being one per cent.

The death of Miss Mary Allen West in Japan where she had gone for a much needed vacation, was a shock to the women of America. Miss West was at the time of her death editor-in-chief of the *Union Signal*, the "White Ribbon" paper of which Miss Frances Willard and Lady Henry Somerset are assistant editors. She was the President, from the beginning, of the Illinois Woman's Press Association. In former years Miss West was a teacher, and she was one of the first county school superintendents.

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Are acceptable all through the month of February, so it will be to your advantage to read and answer the Free Valentine notice on page seven.

PERSONAL. We can send you free an article that will be of great value to you, if you will address The Giant Oxie Co., Augusta, Maine, and if you agree to show the articles to neighbors, will also give you a half-dollar cert. The long and severe cold snap will prove a great drain on your system as well as pocket, so write for it to-day and you will be safe and happy.

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BY SALLIE JOY WHITE.

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DO you know I think there is something perfectly delightful in the way many women, nowadays, keep up their youthful feeling and appearance, their freshness of thought, and their interest in the vital affairs of the world.

It is so much better, not only for themselves, but for society and the world, and above all, for their own families, those by whom they are constantly surrounded.

Grandma is no longer relegated to the chimney corner with her knitting work, her spectacle case and her snuff-box. Not a bit

of it. She sits where she likes, and she knits if she wants to, and she doesn't use snuff. She may wear spectacles, but in many cases she is modern enough to prefer the pince-nez. She is a charming companion, she reads COMFORT and the daily papers, she belongs to the W.C.T.U. or some kindred organization; she has decided political opinions, and ten to one she is the only one in the family who reads the whole of the President's Message.

She is full of sympathy for the young people, is the confidante and adviser of every member of the family, is the best nurse in sickness, knows how to cook the nicest dainties, and is always ready to hear about any frolic, while she is not above taking a hand in the quiet fun.

I was thinking of a group of women I know, all above seventy years, every one of whom is actively engaged in the world's work, doing helpful things for every other woman in the world. There is Julia Ward Howe, as gracious and queenly with the crown of her seventy-two years, as she was in the first flush of ripened womanhood. Mrs. Zerelda Wallace—the inspiration of her gifted son when he wrote "Ben Hur"—who is the veritable "Mother in Israel" among the white ribbon workers in the cause of home protection. Mrs. Mary A. Livermore, as alert, and active at seventy-one, as she was when she began her first public work with the Sanitary Commission in the early forties. Mrs. Lucy Stone, who has done more than any other woman I know to open out new ways for the women who follow her, and who is a perpetual benediction to her sex.

Isn't that a notable group of women? Well, there are thousands of others, who although they may not have the international fame of these women, yet do a splendid work and wield a beautiful influence on those about them.

But what has all this to do with fashion, do you ask?

Well, just this much. Somebody complained one day because she said the fashions were all written for young women, there was nothing ever said for the grandmothers.

So I began thinking about the matter, then I contrasted the fashions of to-day that are approved and adopted by elderly women, with those which they formerly considered appropriate, and then all that I have just said came to me. It is not only the fashions for women that have altered, but the fashions of women, as well.

There is no longer a rigid line of demarcation between the young, the middle-aged and the elderly women. They slip along from one estate to another so gently and so gradually that no one ever thinks about it, not even the woman herself. Women—at least those who regard what is called fine courtesy—never think of discussing their own age, or that of their friends, any more than men do. And I think you will all agree with me that the question, "How old is he?" is almost never heard when a man is the subject of conversation, while it is very apt to be almost the first question that is asked about a woman by the unthinking or idly curious of her own sex.

Not that she is ashamed of her advancing years. That is not at all the reason why she does not ask a question. It is a straight reply. It is because she wishes to convey, as gently as possible, the fact that it is none of the questioner's business and that courtesy should forbid her asking this, or any question of a purely personal nature. It is often done unthinkingly, but it should be remembered that the highest courtesy, the test of the best breeding, is thoughtfulness in all matters, no matter how trivial they may seem.

But to come to gowns and bonnets, and caps and chemisettes, and all the dainty accessories of an elderly woman's wardrobe.

I think that one of the best fashions for gowns is the princess, with its straight lines and its perfect simplicity of style. It is becoming to nearly every figure, and it is suitable to every material from the simple print to the elegant, stately silk. It will admit of elaborate trimming, or it will still be finished with its row of buttons down the front, and the ruffle at the neck and wrists.

Of course a great deal of its style and effect depends upon its perfect fit, and that depends upon what is worn underneath.

A great many women, as they grow older, think more about the protecting qualities of their underclothing than they do of its fit.

Now there is no reason in the world why both objects should not be attained. In the first place, let the union undergarments take the place of the separate underdrawers and vest. Much more comfort will be attained, while the superfluous folds about the waist will be done away with. These union undergarments may be obtained in any weight of wool, in the Jaeger wool, in silk and wool combined, in all silk, and in Balbriggan. The cost is about the same

as that of the separate garments would be. Once having worn these union suits you will never go back to the separate ones. Nowadays these garments may be found in almost every town, and if by any chance you cannot obtain them near home, you can send your order to any reliable house in the large cities, giving the bust measure and length of sleeve and leg, and the quality and weight you desire, and it will be sent you with the bill to be collected on delivery.

Then wear either an easy corset, or one of the many health waists that are high in the neck, or low as you prefer, with rows of buttons for the cotton drawers, and the skirts. These waists are made on the corset principle, the number of bones used depending on the size of the wearer, stout figures requiring more than slight ones. This gives you the maximum of ease, and the minimum of fatigue, for the weight of the clothing is so evenly distributed, that no one set of muscles is exhausted at the expense of the rest.

Now you are ready to have your princess dress fitted, and it may be as easy as you please, and still have the smooth effect that is the charm and grace of such a dress. Although most elderly women wear black from preference, they are not compelled to do so unless they choose, for there are beautiful soft grays, and warm rich browns for them to select, and also the dark blues and greens. Then there are striped stuffs, and figured materials, the figures being formed by the weave, and being in the same color as the ground.

Velvet, passementerie and lace are all used as appropriate trimmings. All manner of dainty handkerchiefs, fichus and chemisettes are found for these dear dressers, in lace or in sheer muslin. I never got over my fondness for the dress cut open at the throat and filled in with folds of muslin, or with an embroidered chemisette, the folds held together under the chin by a pretty, old-fashioned brooch.

The caps that are worn now are so distractingly pretty in themselves that one longs for the right to don them. They are not the formidable structures of lace and ribbon and flowers that used to be thought "the thing." Not a bit; they are the foamiest, airiest bits of lace, with pretty ribbon bows, and they are made to lie lightly on the top of the head; perhaps they are just woven squares of real lace, with lappets that fall on the shoulders; this for the very best cap, to be donned with the black silk gown on the most dressed-up of occasions.

One thing elderly women don't do any more, and that is to dye their hair. They let it whiten as it will, and they wave it, just as their daughters do, and the silvery frame softens the skin and does not bring out every wrinkle and line, as the colored hair does.

Nature never makes mistakes, she knows what she is doing all the while, so it is best not to interfere with her. Miss Littlebel has made some pictures of the pretty caps and collars and fichus that grandma may wear, and some of the clever granddaughters can copy them to surprise grandmas with.

Many women, past the middle age, cling to the old fashion of round skirts, gathered and sewed to the waists, and full bishop sleeves. I know one woman, the wife of one of the richest men in Boston, a woman whose name is in the mouth of hundreds of poor persons in grateful thankfulness for her never-failing benevolence, who has never altered the fashions of her own youth. She was a girl, and always has been, made in the old-fashioned way just described. She wears black silk always, with the finest of lace ruffles at the throat and wrists, and she is one of the sweetest pictures of gracious, beneficent womanhood that I ever saw.

There is so much more that I want to say, but I promised to talk a little to the mothers, so the grandmothers must not hold me by their fascinating web, or I shall do what I try always to avoid doing, and that is, breaking a promise.

I dare say I shall only begin, as it is, and have something over for next time, but that is better than nothing, after all.

January and February are the best months for looking out for bargain sales. At this time the last season's stock of cotton stuffs are brought out and sold at very low prices. It is just the time for the family mother to look out for the school dresses which her little girls will need for summer wear.

As the fashions of gingham, cambrics and chambrays change very little from season to season, it would be very foolish to wait for the new goods in either to bring pretty things. You will get nothing prettier, even if it is a trifle newer, and you will pay much more for it. I have bought, at these January and February sales, gingham for 12½-2 cents a yard, which I would have paid 25 cents a yard for in the summer, and for 17 cents a yard I have purchased a beautiful quality of the genuine Anderson Scotch gingham, which I had seen sold in the season for 37½-2 cents a yard.

If you do not care to make these dresses up, you can lay them aside until later, but I think it a good economy of time to make the cotton dresses early, as far as possible, because the style of making varies very little from season to season, and if you get them done and hung up all ready for wear, you have the time left open for the important work which comes later.

The fashion for these dresses is still the round waist, low-necked and sleeveless, or with a short full sleeve, to wear with a white gimp, or a gimp of plain colored gingham. There is nothing so pretty for a girl until she is twelve years old as these gimp dresses, and they are so easily made that no mother need fear undertaking them.

Jaunty little aprons, for dressy occasions, are

made of China silk, muslin or nainsook, and are trimmed with lace or fine French embroidery. Two models are given here, one the Empire apron, following the fashion in favor with the older girls, of short waists and low necks, the other a sort of tunic apron, with full skirts, and a waist piece at the back and front, meeting on the shoulders.

CONSUMPTION CURED.

An old physician, retired from practice, had placed in his hands by an East India missionary the formula of a simple vegetable remedy for the speedy and permanent cure of Consumption, Bronchitis, Catarrh, Asthma and all Throat and Lung Affections, also a positive and radical cure for Nervous Debility and all Nervous Complaints. Having tested its wonderful curative powers in thousands of cases, and desiring to relieve human suffering, I will send free of charge to all who wish it, this recipe in German, French or English, with full directions for preparing and using. Sent by mail, by addressing, with stamp, naming this paper, W.A. Noyes, 820 Powers' Block, Rochester, N.Y.



SHOO FOR 4 EARLY TOMATOES!

—THIS WONDERFUL—
"EARLIEST TOMATO IN THE WORLD"
is just what everyone wants. It has proved the earliest and best by the results of every variety. It bears abundantly of large bright red tomatoes, very smooth, of excellent quality, extremely solid all through, with only a few seeds and free from rot. My plants set in garden last of May produced full size ripe tomatoes July 2nd, and was pronounced a perfect wonder by all who saw them growing. After you once test them you will grow no others for they grow so rapidly. Seed was sown in hot bed in April. I want a BIG record for this tomato in 1893, and will pay \$500 in cash to a person growing a ripe tomato in 75 days from the date the seed is sown. Also \$400 to the person growing a ripe tomato in the least number of days from day sown to sown, \$125 for next and \$75 for next. BEWARE OF FRAUDS! For I am introducer and own all the seed. Never offered before.

SURE HEAD CABBAGE is all head and sure to head, very uniform, of quality, and a good keeper. I will pay \$100 for the heaviest head grown from my seed in 1893 and \$50 for the next heaviest. Single heads have weighed over 60 lbs. in 1893 and \$50 for the next heaviest. It is the largest and handsomest ever offered. Single specimens, under

GIANT SILVER QUEEN ONION offered. They are of mild and delicate flavor, grow rapidly, ripen early, flesh white and handsome. I will pay \$100 for the heaviest onion grown from my seed in 1893, and \$50 for next heaviest.

ALICE PANSY contains the greatest number of colors (many never seen before in pinks) of any pansy ever offered. I offer \$500 in cash to a person growing a Blossom of the "Alice Pansy" in 1893, from my seed, 4½ inches in diameter, and \$300 for the largest blossom grown, \$100 for second, \$50 for third, \$50 for fourth, \$50 for fifth and \$50 for sixth. Try this and get some beauties. Full particulars of all prizes in my catalogue.

MY CATALOGUE is full of bargains. \$4,500 offered in premiums: \$500 in cash to persons sending me the largest number of customers, and every one will be paid July 1st. Mrs. T. B. Young, Rock City, Ill., sent largest club order in 1892 and I paid her \$500. Her photograph is in catalogue. Don't buy a seed until you see it. Prices low. Customers get 50 cents extra of their selection FREE.

MY OFFER I will send a package each of "Earliest Tomato in the World," Sure Head Cabbage, Giant Silver Queen Onion, and Alice Pansy with my Catalogue for only 25¢. Every person sending silver, P. N. or M. O. for the above collection will receive free a package Mammoth Prize Tomato, which grows over 14½ high, and this year I will pay \$500 to any person growing one weighing 4 lbs. It CAN be done. If 2 persons send for two collections together each will receive Free a package of "Wonder of the World" Beans. They originated among a tribe of Indians, stalks grow large as broom handle and produce 18 in. long. Beans white. It is a wonder, and such a curiosity has never been heard of before. Address, F. B. Mills, Rose Hill, N.Y.

(Mr. Mills is perfectly reliable and trustworthy. Ed.)

GRANDEST

offer Ever Made. A fine \$25 watch to every reader of this paper. Cut this out and send it to us with your full name and address and we will send you one of these fine 14 K. gold-plated inlaid watches. The base of the case is made of fine jeweler's metal which is guaranteed to wear 20 years.

The movement is beautifully jeweled and damasked throughout. You examine it at the Express and if you are satisfied it is equal in appearance to any \$25 gold watch you may pay the agent our sample price, \$5.85, and it is yours. If you will send the cash \$5.85 with your order, thereby saving us the express charges, we will send you FREE a fine gold-plated chain to match the watch. This offer will not be made again. Remember, we send our guarantee that the watch can be returned at any time within one year if found otherwise than represented. Address

KEENE'S MAMMOTH WATCH HOUSE, 15 Washington St., Sample Dept. 8, Boston, Mass.

LOVELY NEW VARIEGATED TUBEROSE

The leaves of this grand variety are bordered with creamy white. Flowers very large and of exquisite fragrance. Buds continue to grow and bloom year after year. It makes a most magnificent plant. It blooms several weeks earlier than the other sorts, which greatly adds to its value. For only 25¢ we will send by mail, postpaid, all of the following: 1 bulb of the Lovely New Variegated Tuberose; 1 bulb of the Excelsior Pearl Tuberose; 1 bulb of the Seedling Gladiti; 2 bulbs Ozalis free bloomers; 1 pkt. Fuller's Perfection Pansy seed; 1 pkt. Snow Queen Pansy pure satin white; 1 pkt. Fuller's New King Balm; 1 pkt. Floral Park Giant Phlox; 1 pkt. Lovely Margaret Carnation; 1 pkt. Fuller's New Rose Aster, double flowers great beauty. These rare bulbs and seeds will all flower this season and we send them for only 25¢. Order at once. Catalogue sent free.

J. ROSCOE FULLER & CO. Floral Park, N.Y.

FREE by return mail, full descriptive circulars of MOODY'S NEW AND IMPROVED TAILOR SYSTEMS OF DRESS CUTTING. Revised to date. These, only, are the genuine TAILOR SYSTEMS invented and copyrighted by PROF. D.W. MOODY. Beware of imitations. Any lady of ordinary intelligence can easily and quickly learn to cut and make any garment, in any style, to any measure, for ladies, men and children. Garments guaranteed to fit perfectly without trying on. Address MOODY & CO. CINCINNATI, O.

PRICE We sell DIRECT TO FAMILIES PIANOS ORGANS \$150 to \$1500 \$25 to \$500 Absolutely Perfect! Sent for trial in your own home before you buy. Local Agents must sell inferior instruments or charge double what we ask. Catalogue free. MARCHAL & SMITH PIANO CO., 235 East 21st St., N.Y.

HIMROD'S CURE FOR ASTHMA

Catarrh, Hay Fever, Diphtheria, Croup and Common Colds. Send for a Free Sample. HIMROD MANUF. CO., 191 Fulton St., New York.

AGENTS GUM TISSUE mends clothing better than needle and thread; silks, woolsens, gloves, umbrellas. 10c. a yard; 12 yds 65c. by mail. STAYNOR & CO., Providence, R. I.

NO MORE CATARRH. The Great German Remedy is a positive cure. Free sample package and book for 4 cents in stamps. E. H. MEDICAL CO., East Hampton, Conn.

\$50 a WEEK. self-extinguishing, non-explosive Lamp Burners. Selling at sight. To those meaning business, sample free. Exclusive territory given. FBENIX CO., 22 Mechanic St., Newark, N. J.

BEATTY Pianos, Organs, \$33 up. Want agts. Cat'g Free. Dan'l F. Beatty, Wash'ton, N.J.

STUDY LAW AT HOME.

TAKE A COURSE IN THE SPRAGUE CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL OF LAW, (Incorporated.)

Send ten cents (stamps) for particulars to J. COTNER, JR., Sec'y, DETROIT, MICH. 640 WHITNEY BLOCK.



FREE SILVER SPOONS

To introduce goods quickly I make this liberal offer: I will give any lady One Dozen Tea Spoons, Heavy Silver plated, latest artistic design, warranted to wear, who will dispose of 1 Dozen Boxes of Hawley's Corn Salve (cure warranted) among friends, at 25¢ a box. I ask no money in advance, simply send your name; I mail you salve and spoons paid. When sold you send the money and I will mail you the 1 dozen handsome Tea Spoons. I take salve back if you can't sell. I run all the risk. Address R. HAWLEY, Chemist, Berlin, Wisconsin.

The WOMAN'S HOME JOURNAL

The WOMAN'S HOME JOURNAL is the most popular woman's household journal in America. Its sixteen pages each issue have original articles on Fashion, Millinery, Dressmaking, Instructions how to do all kinds of Fancy Work, Advice upon Home Work, Suggestions upon Household Decoration, a Floral Department, Gardening, etc. etc. Our stories are by the best authors. Subscribe now and get it.

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SEWING OUTFIT FREE to every lady who mentions this paper. This valuable outfit contains 138 useful articles for a lady's workbasket, and would cost, if bought at retail, upwards of \$1. Address WOMAN'S HOME JOURNAL, Boston, Mass.

Send \$2.00 for a large FUR RUG

5½ ft. long, 33 in. wide. Perfect in every respect. Long soft fur. Silver White or Grey. Suitable for any Parlor or Reception Hall. Moth proof. Sent C. O. D. on approval.

LAWRENCE, BUTLER, & BENHAM, 71 High St., Columbus, O. Our illustrated book on Carpets and Curtains, free.

BEAUTY FREE!

Send 6 Cts. Postage for Madame Yale's Beauty Book. Just out. Contains valuable hints to Beauty and Loveliness. Tells young girls how to obtain a husband; married ladies how to retain their husband's love. Address, MADAME M. YALE, Beauty Specialist, 146 State St., Chicago, Ill. 37 West 14th St., N.Y.

Pinless Clothes Line

WANTED—Salesmen to whom we will give EXCLUSIVE TERRITORY to sell our celebrated PINLESS CLOTHES LINE, the only line ever invented that holds clothes WITHOUT PINS—a wonderful success; or our famous FOUNTAIN INK ERASER which will erase ink instantly, and has no rival.

The success of our salesmen shows the great demand for these articles, many making \$50 to \$100 per day. On receipt of 50¢, will mail sample of either, or sample of both for 1¢, with price-list and terms. PINLESS CLOTHES LINE CO., No. 121 Hermon Street, Worcester, Mass.

Fountain Ink Eraser

Newcomb Fly-Shuttle Rag Carpet Loom

Weaves 100 yards per day. Catalogue free. C. N. NEWCOMB, 324 W. St. Des Moines, Iowa.

THIS \$11 to \$17 FREE SEWING MACHINE

to examine any home. Sent anywhere without one cent in advance. Warranted the best sewing machine ever made. Our terms, conditions and everything for more liberal than any other house ever offered. For full particulars, etc., cut this advertisement out and send to us today. Address: Alvah Mfg. Co., Dept. A5, Chicago, Ill.

A RELIABLE WOMAN

Wanted in every County to establish a Corset Parlor for the sale of Dr. Nichols' Celebrated Spiral Spring Corsets and Clamps. Wages \$40 to \$75 per month and expenses. We furnish complete stock on consignment, settlements monthly; \$3 Sample Corset free. Send 10 cents postage for sample and terms.

Nichols Mfg. Co., 378 Canal St., New York.



Specialty Bfg. Co., 59 Dearborn St., Chicago.

THE MYSTIC CASTLE.

Correspondence in this department should be addressed to Oldcastle, Utica, N. Y. Correct name and address should accompany every communication, even when a nom de plume is used.

SOLVERS TO NOVEMBER MYSTERIES:—Waldemar, Ypsie, 10; W. E. Wiatt, 8; Cowboy, Frank, Ideal, Castranova, 8; Thinker, G. Whiz, Black-Eyed Charley, Locust, Bear, 6; So So, Remardo and Calo, Tyro, Lomax, Mrs. G. F. O., 6; Bourgeois, Pat Riot, Mrs. J. H. Cunningham, 4; Frank K. Sebring, U. Telle, Merlin, 2; J. H. Stambaugh, 1.

PRIZE-WINNERS:—1. Waldemar. 2. Ypsie. 3. W. E. Wiatt.

SPECIALS:—1. Castranova. 2. Lomax.

SOLUTIONS TO NOVEMBER MYSTERIES.

No. 358. Carduus benedictus.

No. 361. Self-love.

No. 362. CARAC. No. 363. F. CAP.

ALDER. RIPPENED. ADELOPOD. CENOBITES. REPINER. DOTTED. DER. S. L.

No. 364. Spin-age. No. 365. Methodical.

No. 366. R. No. 368. Elope, pole.

No. 369. Mysteries.

PURITAN. USHERS. RHINE. VIENNA. RETREAT. AS. N.

No. 370. L. No. 372. CELL.

WAP. LACES. DETESTS. WATERPATH. LACERTILOID. PESTILENT. STALELY. STONY. HID. D.

No. 376. COURBAIL. CREATES. NABOB. REP. L.

MYSTERIES.

No. 382. Transposal.

Once there was a lovely lassie,

Played the total with much grace

Which so like an organ has a

Keyboard, bellows, each in place;

And she played and sang the air,

While I tuned it on the base,

And the chords we made were fair.

Now the lass (and sister Mary)

Sing no more, for they are dead;

Sister's casket's made of cherry,

And above a pall they spread;

"Here's a pine" one, where she sleeps,

Safely housed among the dead,

Where each shade its vigils keeps.

Dubois, Ills., ASPIRO.

No. 383. Square.

1. A kind of pick. 2. Stubbhorn. 3. A glucoside. 4.

One who examines. 5. The cessation of agitation. 6.

Brings to light. 7. Dost lease. ROKERY.

No. 384. Charade.

The first is only a little thing,

Yet everyone knows its name,

It's used alike by peasant and king,

Through it many have won fortune and fame.

The second is another small word,

(Pedagogues call it an article.)

And many a girl's name is heard,

But that does not matter a particle.

The third and last, I'm using this minute

In connection with my first, I trow,

You think there is nothing in it,

Yet my whole is before you now.

Burnside, Ills., A. PENANINE.

Nos. 385-6. Icosahedrons.

(1) 1. A kind of cloth. 2. Departure. 3. One who

sets traps. 4. Language of Scotland. 5. A fruit. 6.

To venerate. 7. An open hand. 8. A numerical sym-

bol. 9. A token of honor. 10. An instrument for

measuring vibrations of sound. 11. Those who bring

forth young. 12. Views. 13. Musical syllables.

San Francisco, Cal., J. C. M.

(2) 1. A district in which a particular power is ex-

ercised. 2. Cruel. 3. Curved in two directions. 4. The

evil genius of the Persians. 5. Small furrows. 6.

Malignant persons. 7. To pressure (obs.). 8. To pun-

ish in general. 9. Dark. 10. Spanish composer and

violinist (1775-1832). 11. A natural reservoir. 12. To

contaminate. 13. A hollow in the earth.

Waverford, N. Y., NIMBUS.

Nos. 387-8. Stars.

(1) 1. A letter. 2. In case that. 3. A mineral species

in the early work on mineralogy. 4. Means. 5. The

Gothic vault. 6. A light ribbon. 7. Companions. 8.

An abbreviation. 9. A letter. PAT RIOT.

(2) 1. A letter. 2. So. 3. Certain fruits. 4. Per-

taining to salt. 5. Scent. 6. The surfaces at which

the electric currents enter the electrolytes. 7.

Brightness. 8. To see (obs.). 9. A letter. BOURGEOIS.

Pendletonville, Texas, No. 389. Charade.

Here before you, you will find

Puzzles, if you feel inclined;

To unravel them at leisure,

You will find it quite a pleasure.

Now and then you may indite

Cons for "Mystic Castle" bright.

Take a total and a pen;

Thoughts a few, and in your den

Write them legibly, well.

But the answer do not tell

Little first from out the last

Used in times long since gone past;

Still, if necessary, you

May continue still to do.

Write at once, your puzzles scan,

I will answer, if I can.

San Francisco, Cal., OEDIPUS.

No. 390. Charade.

There sailed on Massachusetts Bay

A lonely fisherman.

In daily quest of last they say,

Believe it if you can.

Here is the yarn he spun for me

Upon a chilly night.

"I've crones worth a sight,

When I have one, two, I can spare

But not so if reversed;

For two, alone, I never care

'Tis no count without first.

When first and second get real warm

I have good company;

When they get cold (where is the harm)

I straightway think of three.

Then search my larder for a bite

Of what I catch each day.

My last, they are a pretty sight

I'll fry some, if you say.

But the very richest "man"

Likes one and two and three—

My whole, deny it now who can

With ladies too, agree.

Pala, Calif., EUREKA.

No. 391. Rhomboid.

Across. 1. A Celtic divinity. 2. One who follows

the business of navigating ships. 3. A medal, not in-

tended for general circulation. 4. The bitter acid

principle of the rattlesnake root. 5. A judge. 6.

Enlarged. 7. Rests on.

Down. 1. A letter. 2. A verb. 3. An animal. 4.

French measures. 5. Broods (obs.). 6. Emptied. 7.

Pertaining to an elementary substance. 8. To fare

sumptuously. 9. A fabled giant of ancient theology.

10. To shear (obs.). 11. A small coin. 12. An ab-

bre-viation. 13. A letter. COWBOY.

PRIZES FOR SOLUTIONS.

For the first three complete or largest lists of solu-

tions to this month's Mysteries, the following prizes

will be awarded:

1. Webster's handy dictionary.

2. Fountain Pen of Comfort.

3. Ten complete novels.

SPECIALS:—Two six-months' subscriptions to COM-

FORT, awarded by lot among the rest of the solvers.

Contest closes April 1.

Solutions, solvers and prize-winners in May "Mys-

tic Castle."

THE MAIDEN'S VOW.

"Come rest in this bosom," "Comrades" and 142

other very popular songs with music will be sent

free if you address Morse & Co., Augusta, Maine, and

enclose 4c. for postage when writing for new catalogue

and premium list for COMFORT.

LADIES' FANCY WORK SET.

We have just imported thousands of Crochet Sets,

they contain 3 vegetable ivory and steel crochet

hooks different sizes, coming in a screw top wooden

case; these sets are what every lady wants in her

work basket or for pocket companion. One hook

sells for 10c. at stores, but The Publishers of COM-

FORT, Augusta, Maine, desire to have all read the

grand February issue and will send one of these

complete sets free to all who send 4c. for mailing same

together with sample copy of February COMFORT.

THE LUCIFER MATCH.

Written for COMFORT.

OME sixty years ago the pro-

cess of obtaining fire was, with

a few exceptions, as laborious

and uncertain as the effort of

the Indian to produce a flame

by the friction of two dry

sticks. The tinder box and

steel were then among the ab-

solute necessities of the

day. The tinman made

the box, and the steel was

forged at the metal fac-

tories; the nearest chalk

quarry supplied the flint.

To use it, the flint and

steel were struck to-

gether into the tinder un-

til a spark was obtained

which lighted it. Tinder

was scorched lint, which

was easily taken fire.

This awkward combination, how-

ever, was not easy to use, and

chemistry discovered that phos-

phorus would ignite when exposed to

the air, especially if aided by slight

friction, a blessing was bestowed

upon the world that can scarcely be

measured by those who have had no

knowledge of the miseries of the tin-

der-box. The box of matches, or lucifers, or by

whatever name called, is a real triumph of Science

and an advance in comfort.

The demand for matches is always continuous.

Every match burnt demands a new match to supply

its place.

Adam Smith has instructed us that the business of

making a pin is divided into about eighteen distinct

operations; and further, that ten persons could make

upward of 48,000 a day with the division of labor;

while if they all wrought independently and separat-

ely, they could not each of them have made twenty.

The lucifer match is a similar example of the im-

portance of labor-saving machinery. The beginning

of the history of the match is at the factory, where

the best Norway deals are cut into splints, twice

the length of the completed match, by special machines.

These little pieces, beautifully accurate in their

minute squareness, are made up into bundles and

then carried to the "dipping house" where, without

being separated, each end of the bundle is first dipped

into sulphur (which renders them more easily igni-

ted). When dry the splints, adhering to each other

by means of the sulphur, must be parted by what is

called "dusting."

They have now to be tipped with a preparation of

phosphorus, or chlorate of potash, according to the

quality of the match. The phosphorus produces the

pale, noiseless fire; the chlorate of potash the sharp,

crackling illumination.

The matches are then dried and gathered up again

into bundles. The dexterity and rapidity with which

the cutting of the splints in the middle—forming two

perfect matches—and the boxing process, which is

their final preparation for market are accomplished,

is nothing short of marvellous.

The strange, ghostly chemical, phosphorus, exerts

a peculiar and very deadly effect upon the human

system, and the men and women employed in the

manufacture of matches are liable, in spite of the ut-

most care, to lose their health after a few months,

being attacked by a blood-poisoning disease which

begins almost invariably in the lower jaw and in-

creases to a fatal end. In England the match-girls

are among the most miserable of any working class.

PILES CURED FREE!

A new, certain, painless cure for all forms of

perils; gives immediate relief, and permanent

cure. To prove it we will send a trial package

free to any one for one 2c. stamp for postage.

Address PYRAMID DRUG CO., Albion, Mich.

LADIES I HAVE A SECRET FOR

YOU. Ad. with two 2-cent stamps

Mrs. J. H. Cronin, Marshall, Mich.

DETECTIVES

Wanted in every county to act in the Secret Service under

instructions from Capt. raudan, ex-Chief Detectives of Cin-

cinnati. Experience not necessary. Established 11 years. Particu-

larly free. Address **German Detective Bureau Co.** 44 Ar-

cade, Cincinnati, O. The methods and operations of this Bureau

investigated and found lawful by United States Government.

WE PAY EXPRESS CHARGES.

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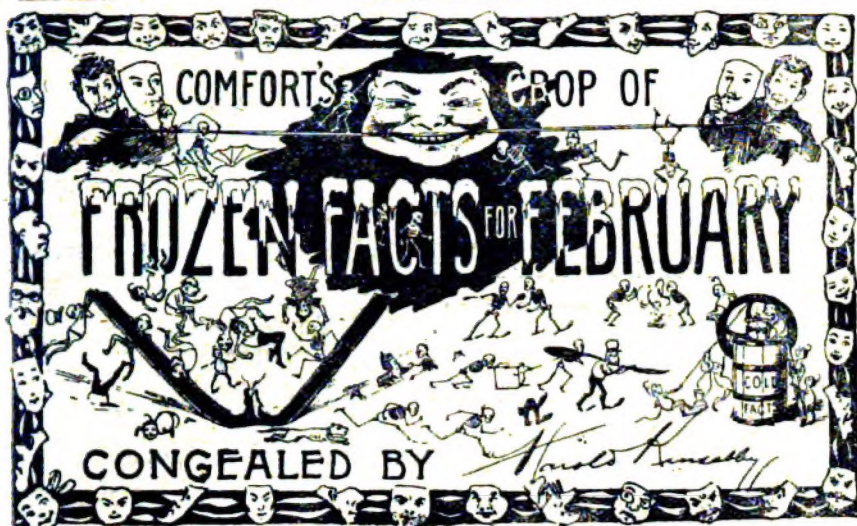
We are the first and only House

to offer a genuine Ameri-

can gold filled hunting

REFERENCES: The Banker's National Bank, Chicago, Ill.
First National Bank, Omaha, Neb.

THE BIRNEY CATARRHAL POWDER CO., Incorporated
1909, W. M. C. 1909



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HERE are two robust reasons why so many of our first citizens are wretched in their domestic relations, while plain, sensible men like journalists, are exceedingly happy. One is that the vain desire to be pointed out as the owner of a great head leads men to bubble over with sweetness and puff before every woman he meets except the one he has bound to himself with a wedding bow and arrow. And this gives rise to feelings of the profoundest variety, for the wife and mother who will not be highly disagreeable when she finds herself neglected, has not yet been found by the census taker.

The second reason is the Mask Ball which is in full bloom during the month of February, and rivals the Base Ball in the color of its stockings and its perilous effects on homes, husbands and happiness. The man who invented the Mask Ball is not known, but judging by the misery it has brought to mankind, he must have lived in Chicago, or at least shaken hands with the devil.

Some frozen facts about a case where this base kind of ball came near wrecking a once happy home have just been taken from the refrigerator. For the sake of the children, of whom there are eleven, the names of the couple who, by the way, formerly belonged to Augusta, but now reside in New York, are withheld. It seems that the woman in the case, who is of a slightly jealous disposition, but otherwise lovely, had reason to believe that her husband was going to attend the Grand Merryman's Masquerade last week, although he solemnly assured her it was his lodge night.

Believing that every woman should be her own detective, she called in a lady friend who is connected with the stage and by the aid of a pair of pink tights, a golden wig, appropriate stage jewels and a few clever touches of the large carpenter's brush and pencil, she rigged herself out as just such a cunning sinner as she felt would catch the villain's eye. Then, partly concealing her face with a dainty silk mask-let, she started to find out whether it was the Lodge or the Liar.

Being a lady of remarkably fine figure, the pink tights displayed her beautiful neck and shoulders with startling effect—as the society papers would put



it. And although the children giggled and asked her if she wasn't afraid of catching cold or being arrested, her own mother declared that she looked sweeter than Adelaide Neilson ever dared to look. Now, when a woman is jealous, and mad, and handsome, it doesn't take her long to do a thing, and the way this little lady shadowed her husband simply drives Pinkerton's detective stories right out into the woodshed. For two long hours she watched him flirting with the false-faced girls and indulging in conduct entirely unbecoming a husband and father of eleven children. Near supper time she set her own cap for him in earnest, and when the poor victim suggested Delmonico's she nodded consent with a grace and readiness that would have made Pauline Markham's head swim. During all their ten years residence in New York he hadn't even once taken her to Del's, and the tenderness with which the old reprobate now helped his pretty little Page in Pink to a seat in the carriage and continued his flirtation nearly gave her heart failure. She was bound, however, to see just what such men are made of, and she played her role like an eight hundred dollars a week star klicker. But it was a fearful struggle. When he suddenly begged for "one sweet kiss before we part" she felt like calling the police but by dexterously ducking her head she became entangled in her golden tresses and fell lifeless upon her left ear. Again he aimed at the rosy lips, but the sly glances of the silvery moon stole in this time and revealed to him his wife's unmasked face in all its effervescent wrath.

The attending physician says that with absolute quiet and careful nursing the husband may be out again by spring, but that he shows unmistakable symptoms of having had a stroke of paralysis during the last lodge night.

The same mysterious law which causes a slice of bread to fall butter-side down, seems invariably to land the newly-made bride and groom in the clutches of the photographer. And it is a serio-comic fact that love's young dream frequently has its picture taken under diffi-ulties.

The other day two fond hearts embarked from Maine on the journey of life, by way of New York. When they reached the metropolis, both he and she thought it would be ever so nice to have her photographed in all that bridal gorgeousness which had caused the Toga Transcript to remark that "the classic beauty of the blushing bride held every eye in rapt suspense."

Every man who has been more or less married knows that during Honeymooning the best is none

too good, so they sought the studio of the Napoleon of Negatives, agreed to pay \$14 per dozen and look pleasant.

The groom, who by the way, is a six-footer, evidently believes that life is made up of little things, for his better half is what most people would call tiny.

As she must of course have her portrait taken standing to show her vestibule train, she was asked to appear as tall as possible, and therefore proceeded to a fashionable hairdresser to have her upper story artificially elongated. This artist in headgear erected a sort of Eiffel Tower Junior upon her head, and as the natural crop was exceedingly scant, he deftly worked in a generous amount of "London dyed" that matched beautifully and which she agreed to return after the agony was over.

In order not to throw this hair stack out of plumb the young bride had to proceed bareheaded to the photographer's, and as she walked down Fifth Avenue, her hat and train in one hand and the regulation brides' bouquet in the other, while the attentive husband meekly brought up the rear with his overcoat pockets bulging out with such trifles as satin slippers, flask of smelling salts, ostrich plume fan and other ecclesiastics—the avenue fairly stood aghast with astonishment.

When the couple were finally ushered into the noted photographer's chamber of horrors, Ferguson, the regular operator, introduced himself and prepared to do the honors. Hitch number one occurred right there, for the bride insisted upon being "taken" by the proprietor himself. When the latter appeared, she took him over to a frame full of prize cabinets of famous beauties, and pointing to those of Lillian Russell and Mary Anderson said that she wanted hers taken "just like that." At this, Ferguson, who was born to blush unseen, poked his head under the black cloth of the camera, so that he could snicker in concealment, while Sarony of course preserved his artistic balance, knowing that her husband had been calling her the loveliest woman in the world about fifty times a day ever since they were married. So with his sweetest smile he posed her in front of the big white screen, fussed around, squinted through the machine at her and then propped up her head with a pair of photographic tongs just back of the ears.

And, when finally, purely with a view to artistic effect, he chuckled the fair bride under the chin, the groom, who had viewed the proceedings with kealous alarm, entirely unaware of the number of brides Sarony annually chuckles under the chin—could scarcely suppress his insane desire to slaughter the artist.

By this time the little "sitter"—who in this case was standing—was getting nervous beyond endurance, and just as the operator, bent upon catching the finest feature of her face, requested her to turn her head first to one side and then to the other, the long arrangement became hopelessly entangled in her hair and with one sickening swoop literally snatched the little lady bald-headed.

With a shriek, she bounded into her husband's arms and both vanished from the scene, leaving only the sad wreck festooned about the head-prop, while Napoleon did a raging war-dance around the scalp of his victim. Next morning he received a bill from the hairdresser asking settlement for 1 Puff, 2 Rats, 3 Switches and a Langtry Wave.

But the bridal couple never came back.



THE reason why folks don't enthuse more over Washington's birthday is because the truth about George hasn't been half told. History has painted the Father of his Country in Sabbath-school colors and surrounded him with a sort of keep-off-the-grass halo, when as a matter of fact there was a strong seasoning of the Old Harry in the make-up of the immortal G. W. And there is, after all, nothing so warm and wins the healthy human heart as a bit of simon-pure sin and devilry. It is to the average mortal what the otter of roses is to the otter, and George had it to the Queen's taste.

For over a century George has been drawing a fat salary as a saint, without having any of the wages of sin charged up against him. And yet, according to his own nurse, who is now an hundred and nineteen years old—and who lives in Mississippi and in full hopes of a glorious future—he used to go to school and plague timid little boys by pointing his index finger at them and exclaiming in a disagreeable tone of voice: "He has no shirt on! he has no shirt on!" And then when his weeping victims fled to their mothers or teachers, and pulled down their vests, George would try to explain the outrage away by claiming that he simply meant his own finger had no shirt on.

It's a pity that the truth about George isn't more generally known.

Ladies with an Imperfect Skin should send 25 cents to Dr. H. A. Miner, Malden, Mass.,

A young woman who is employed in the telephone office in Chicago was discharged for allowing an account of her being robbed by a highwayman to be published without first asking the permission of the telephone company's officials.

Out in Missouri a prominent capitalist is being prosecuted for neglecting or refusing to vote, at the last election. The law in that State provides a fine of \$250 for this offense. It would arouse American citizens quite effectually to a realizing sense of their responsibility in this matter, if such a law should be generally adopted throughout the country.

Derma-Royale is the new discovery for dissolving and removing discolorations from the cuticle, and bleaching and brightening the complexion. The proprietors, the Derma-Royale Co., Cincinnati, Ohio, agree to forfeit \$500 cash, for any case of mothpatches, brown spots, liver spots, blackheads, ugly or muddy skin, unnatural redness, freckles, tan, or any other cutaneous discoloration (excepting birth-marks, scars, and those of a scrofulous or kindred nature), that Derma-Royale will not quickly remove and cure. It is perfectly harmless and will be sent anywhere for \$1.00 per bottle. Agents are wanted.



A FOOT-HOLD for Consumption is what you are offering, if your blood is impure. Consumption is simply Lung Scrofula. A scrofulous condition, with a slight cough or cold, is all that it needs to develop it.

But just as it depends upon the blood for its origin, so it depends upon the blood for its cure. The surest remedy for Scrofula in every form, the most effective blood-cleanser, flesh-builder, and strength-restorer that's known to medical science, is Doctor Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery. For Consumption in all its earlier stages, and for Weak Lungs, Asthma, Severe Coughs, and all Bronchial, Throat, and Lung affections, that is the only remedy so unfailing that it can be guaranteed. If it doesn't benefit or cure, you have your money back.

No matter how long you've had Catarrh, or how severe, Dr. Sage's Remedy will effect a permanent cure. \$500 reward is offered by the proprietors of this medicine, for an incurable case of Catarrh.

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A Sample Cake of Facial Soap and a 150 page book on Dermatology and Beauty, illustrated; on Skin, Scalp, Nervous and Blood Diseases and their treatment, sent sealed on receipt of 10 cts. also Disfigurements, like Birth Marks, Moles, Warts, India Ink and Powder Marks, Scars, Pimples, Redness of Nose, Superfluous Hair, Pimples, Facial Development, Changing the Features, Shaping the Ears, Nose, etc.

JOHN H. WOODBURY, Dermatologist, 125 West 42d Street, New York City. Consultation Free at Office or by letter.

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This excellent variety is distinguished from all others by its large stiff stalks, as shown in the illustration, standing up like a tree without support of any other plants. It bears abundantly of large, bright red tomatoes, smooth and of fine flavor; it is early and entirely free from rot; the leaves are green and of a dark green color, almost black, and plant very ornamental in appearance as well.

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